



# Kaleideum™

## Impact Report

July 2024-June 2025



### Where Learning, Fun, and Community Collide





214,952  
21,361 214  
5,887 1,287

These numbers tell a story.

Success — and even impact — are often measured in numbers. I understand that. But at Kaleideum, every number represents something more important: people. Kaleideum is not simply a museum — it is a place where curiosity becomes confidence and discovery becomes possibility.

This past year marked our first full year in our new downtown home in Winston-Salem. When Kaleideum opened its doors, we hoped it would be a place where curiosity, creativity, and community come together. Every day, we see that vision come to life.

**More than 214,000** people visited Kaleideum this year — a remarkable 60 percent increase and, more importantly, a powerful reminder of how deeply our community values spaces where learning and fun collide.



As board chair, a longtime supporter of Kaleideum, and a parent, what makes me most proud is our commitment to access. Today, 15 percent of admissions come through Museums for All, providing reduced admission for families who might otherwise face barriers to visiting. Certain schools and community organizations also receive free admission. That percentage has nearly doubled since opening downtown — reinforcing what we believe deeply: when access expands, opportunity expands with it.

Kaleideum has become an even stronger resource for educators and students. This year, **more than 21,000** students from **214** schools visited on field trips — a 49 percent increase from the previous year. More than half of these schools were Title I.



But the story of Kaleideum is bigger than attendance. It lives in **1,287** summer campers discovering new passions, in birthday celebrations with first-time guests, and in **5,887** Kaleideum After Dark attendees ranging from 21 to 91 — true lifelong learners. It lives in hands-on moments of discovery unfolding throughout the museum each day.

Behind every number is a moment of possibility.

A child asking their first big question.  
A teacher watching curiosity take hold.  
A family discovering something new together.

These moments are what Kaleideum is built for — and thanks to the support of our community, they are only just beginning.

With gratitude,

**Pam Anglin**  
Board Chair, Kaleideum  
Fiscal Year 2024-25

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# A Milestone Year. A Community Connected.

**Where learning and fun collide — and where our community comes together.**

This fiscal year marked a milestone for Kaleideum — our first full year in our new home in the heart of downtown Winston-Salem. What we envisioned has come to life in ways both measurable and deeply meaningful. Every day, families, students, and visitors from across our region walked through our doors and experienced a place where curiosity is celebrated, creativity is nurtured, and learning feels like play.

From daily hands-on experiences like Wonder Lab and Innovation Station to signature events that filled our building and surrounding streets with energy, Kaleideum has become a vibrant gathering place. Large-scale events like MESStival, along with community collaborations such as Gears and Guitars' Streets of Fire, brought thousands together in shared experiences that extended beyond our walls. In addition, featured exhibitions such as *Moon to Mars* invited families to imagine what's possible when science, innovation, and human ingenuity intersect.

Just as important as the number of visitors we welcomed is who we reached. Through Museums for All, we expanded access so that cost is not a barrier to discovery, serving more economically diverse families than ever before. This commitment to accessibility is central to who we are — and who we strive to be.

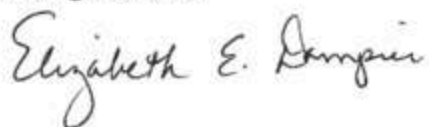


Our impact extends beyond our walls. Kaleideum is helping energize downtown — drawing families, supporting local businesses, and contributing to a renewed sense of momentum and pride in our community.

We are especially proud of programs like Invention Convention, which engaged approximately 1,400 students in hands-on problem solving and creative thinking, empowering the next generation of innovators.

This year affirmed what we have long believed: when a community invests in a place for learning and exploration, the return is immeasurable. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected community through the power of play, creativity, and discovery.

With gratitude,



Elizabeth Dampier  
Chief Executive Officer, Kaleideum



*“When a community invests in a place for learning and exploration, the return is immeasurable.”*





## Community, Connection, and Collective Discovery

At Kaleideum, some of our most visible moments of impact don't look like traditional learning — they look like costumes, slime, messy paint, and joy.

Two signature events — Ghou! Times and MESStival — bring thousands of individuals of all ages together in ways that feel festive on the surface, but are deeply connected to our mission of inspiring curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning.

Each October, Ghou! Times transforms Kaleideum into a playful Halloween experience filled with trick-or-treating, spooky science, slime, and a costume contest. It's a day where children step into imagination — testing textures in sensory boxes, experimenting with “spooky” reactions, exploring a “haunted” hallway, and engaging with science in ways that feel accessible, social, and fun.

When spring arrives, so does May's MESStival, which invites participants to do something even more unexpected: get completely, unapologetically messy. From oobleck pools and a foam party to collaborative art and sensory play, the experience encourages experimentation without hesitation. Guests are given permission to explore freely — mixing, building, splashing, and discovering together.

What connects these two events is not just their popularity — it's their purpose.



Both Ghoul Times and MESStival lower barriers to participation and invite the entire community into the museum. They create shared experiences where learning happens naturally through play, where creativity is celebrated, and where people engage side by side.

They also reflect something essential about Kaleideum: that meaningful learning doesn't always happen in quiet, focused moments. Sometimes, it happens in laughter, in movement, and even in a little bit of chaos.

These are the moments when curiosity takes hold — and when a museum becomes something more. Moments that connect us, stay with us, and remind us why spaces like Kaleideum matter.



## Honoring Service Through Access

Time together as a family matters — and for military families, that time can be especially meaningful. Kaleideum is proud to be part of Blue Star Museums, a nationwide collaboration led by the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Blue Star Families, the United States Department of Defense, and more than 2,000 museums across the country. From Armed Forces Day through Labor Day, Kaleideum offers free admission to active-duty military personnel and their families — creating space for connection, exploration, and a day that simply feels like family time.

The Blue Star Museums program at Kaleideum is supported in part by Triumph Group, whose investment helps keep access a priority for military families.

Kaleideum extends this commitment throughout the year, beyond the Blue Star Museums summer season. During the school year, military personnel receive \$2 off admission, helping ensure continued access to hands-on learning and shared experiences. It is one small way to recognize the service and sacrifice of those who serve.



Supported in part by



## Building Foundations, Practicing Skills Through Play

At Kaleideum, we know that young children learn best by doing — by exploring, testing, and making sense of the world around them. Our early childhood programs — Preschool Discovery, Tot Time, and Little Innovators — are designed to meet that moment, combining play with intentional learning experiences that build a strong foundation for future success.

In our early learning programs, we don't treat learning and play as separate activities. Instead, we intentionally blend them through a strategy called guided play. The difference lies in who directs the experience. Free play is child-led and essential for social and emotional growth. Guided play invites educators to take a more active role — asking thoughtful questions, introducing new tools, and helping children build on what they are already discovering. Together, this integrated approach — often called playful learning — creates opportunities for children to explore big STEM ideas in ways that feel natural and engaging.

In Preschool Discovery, children might explore the concept of opposites through a “sink or float” activity. What begins as simple prediction and testing quickly deepens. With the introduction of a scale, children compare weight, sort materials, and pose new questions. They experiment, collaborate, and even challenge one another's thinking — all while staying fully engaged. In that single experience, children practice early math skills, scientific reasoning, and critical thinking.

Programs like Tot Time and Little Innovators build on this same philosophy, supporting children at different developmental stages as they explore cause and effect, problem-solving, and creativity.

At Kaleideum, play is how learning happens.



## MEMBERSHIP



## More Than a Visit — A Place to Belong

At Kaleideum, membership changes the way you use the museum. It's no longer something you plan weeks in advance — it's the place you go when you have an hour to fill, when the kids need to move, or when you just want to be somewhere that feels easy.

Some days, it's a quick visit — an hour in Little Learners or time spent in a favorite space. Other days, you stay longer. You come back the next week, and then again after that. Over time, it starts to feel familiar. It starts to feel like yours. **Members Only Mondays** offer a quieter start to the week — time to settle in and explore at your own pace. New exhibit openings bring special activities just for members, creating space to experience what's new in a way that feels a little more personal.

And then there are the moments you don't plan for — the pause at the top of the Rooftop Adventure, when a child takes a breath, looks out over the city, and decides they're ready to go just a little higher.

**Kaleideum's community of members includes local businesses, too.** Through Business Memberships, companies make it possible for employees and their families to spend that kind of time together — time that is flexible, shared, and easy to return to.

Membership isn't about checking a box or planning the perfect day.

**It's about being part of something that's always there — ready when you are.**

# Unlocking the Next Generation of Innovators

Somewhere in our community, there is a child with the curiosity of an Albert Einstein — a problem-solver, a question-asker, an innovator in the making. But research from Harvard University reminds us that many of these “Lost Einsteins” never become inventors — not because they lack ability, but because they lack exposure.

At Kaleideum, we are working to change that.

Through the Kaleideum Invention Convention program, young learners are invited to see the world not just as it is, but as it could be. As the only Invention Convention hub in North Carolina, Kaleideum engaged approximately 1,400 students during the 2024–25 school year. These students identified real problems, designed original solutions, and built prototypes that brought their ideas to life. In classrooms and afterschool programs — many serving Title I students — children who may never have imagined themselves as innovators begin to step into that identity with confidence.

As one fourth-grade student who advanced through his school's competition and won the People's Choice Award at Kaleideum reflected, *“I learned that I could do anything as long as I put hard work into it.”*

The Kaleideum Invention Convention is made possible through the partnership of RTX/Collins Aerospace, whose investment goes far beyond funding. Their support helps expand access, deepen learning, and connect students to real-world pathways in STEM. Just as importantly, their employees serve as mentors, judges, and role models — helping students see a future that feels within reach.

Year after year, the impact is powerful. A quiet student finds their voice while pitching an idea. A team refines a prototype after failure and tries again. A child begins to understand that their ideas matter.

Invention Convention is not just about building projects. It is about building possibility — ensuring the next generation of innovators is not lost, but found.



# The “Museum Man” at Kaleideum

If you’ve walked through Kaleideum’s front doors, there’s a good chance you’ve been greeted by Chris Bienko — known to many families simply as “Museum Man.”

For the past two years, Chris has been a steady, welcoming presence at the museum, volunteering Sunday through Thursday wherever he’s needed most. He didn’t sign up because someone asked him to. When he would spend time at the museum with his wife Christy, the Senior Director of Operations, Chris saw a need for a consistent, friendly presence at the front door and stepped in.

From the moment guests arrive, Chris sets the tone. He opens doors, offers directions, and helps visitors navigate their day. He answers questions about exhibits and memberships, shares recommendations about nearby restaurants, and helps manage the flow of guests during busy school group arrivals and special events. Behind the scenes, he supports the gift shop, assists with accessibility needs, and works closely with staff to ensure the front entrance is safe, welcoming, and running smoothly. Chris even drives the Kaleideum truck carrying the museum’s miniature prototype in the Winston-Salem Christmas Parade.

But what truly defines Chris’ impact is the relationships he’s built.

Over time, he has become a familiar and trusted presence for many member families — someone children look for as they walk through the doors. One connection with a member family that visits often has stayed with him. Chris has watched their oldest child grow from riding in a stroller to racing ahead of his parents and pushing the elevator buttons himself. Now, every visit includes a ritual — high fives on the way in and on the way out.

When Chris was out for a brief surgical recovery, the family sent him a video message wishing him well. It was a simple gesture that meant a lot — and a reminder that the connections formed at Kaleideum extend far beyond a single visit.

Those are the moments that keep him coming back — familiar faces, growing kids, and families who feel at home.

At Kaleideum, those connections begin at the front door. And more often than not, they begin with Chris.



*Over time, he has become a familiar and trusted presence for many member families.*



In fiscal year 2024-25,  
**98**  
volunteers dedicated  
**4,462**  
hours of service  
at Kaleideum!



KALEIDOSCOPE BALL





# A Night of Pure Imagination

Kaleideum's 2024 Kaleidoscope Ball marked a milestone moment — the signature fundraising event's first time in the museum's new downtown home. With the theme *A World of Pure Imagination*, the evening transformed Kaleideum into an immersive landscape of imagination spanning four floors, the Rooftop Adventure, and Liberty Plaza.

Chaired by Martha and Sam Metzler and Sarah and Coleman Team, with honorary chairs Cathy and Chris Pace and Scottie and David Neill, the event welcomed 455 guests for an unforgettable night of immersive experiences, elegant dining, and high-energy entertainment from Party on the Moon. Signature Games of Chance — including The Lollipop Shop, Bubbles and Baubles, and the Golden Ticket Raffle — added to the excitement.

The evening raised an impressive \$335,328 to support Kaleideum's mission of inspiring wonder, curiosity, and lifelong learning. In response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in September 2024, \$10,000 from the Games of Chance was donated to Second Harvest Food Bank to aid Western North Carolina.

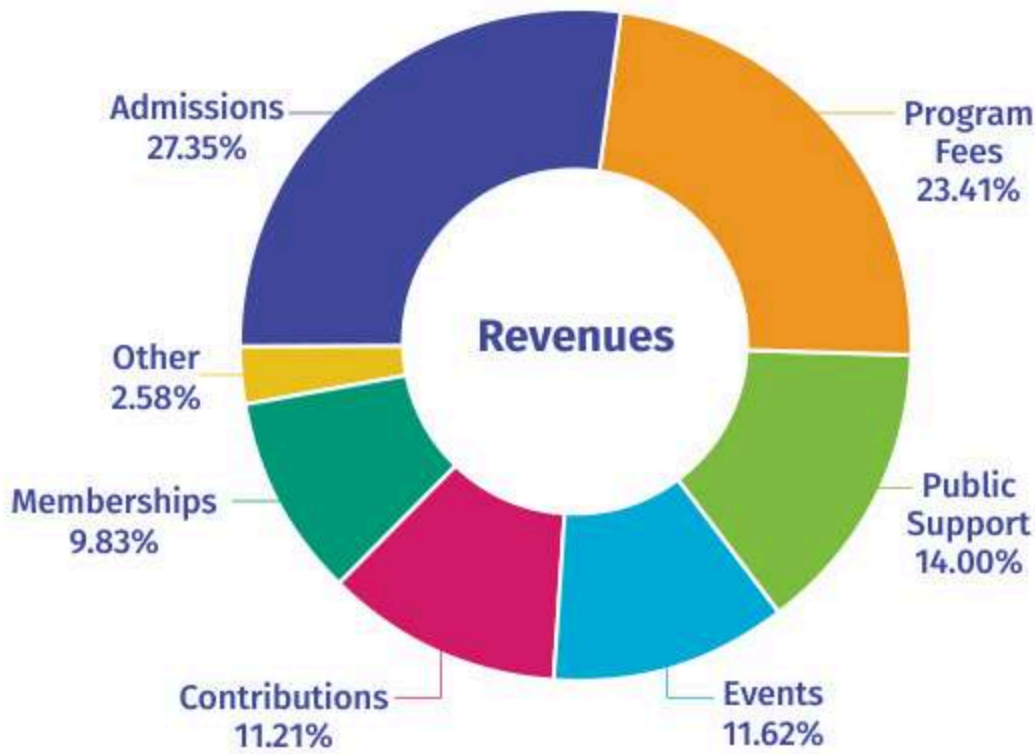
With presenting sponsors Flow Automotive and Mercedes-Benz of Winston-Salem and Greensboro, the Kaleidoscope Ball continued its focus of expanding access and opportunity to ensure all children can learn, explore, and imagine at Kaleideum.



# REVENUES AND EXPENSES

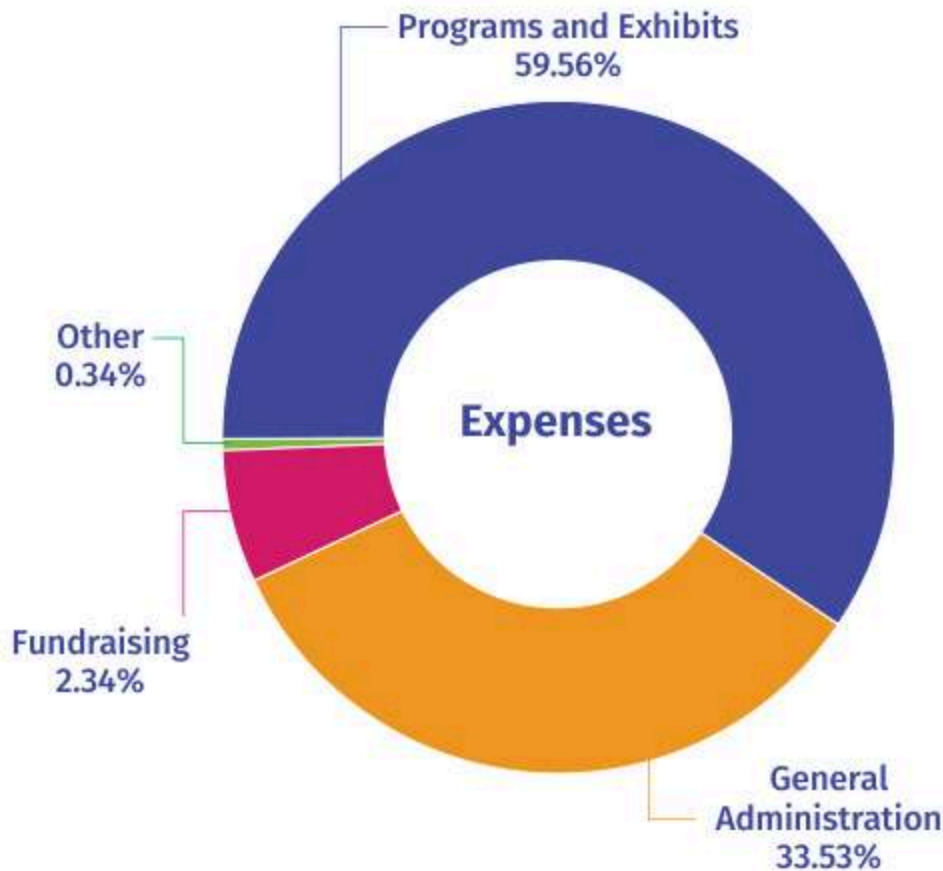
Kaleideum Statement of Financial Position for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025

Source: Fiscal Year 2024-25 Audited Figures



### Revenues

Admissions	\$991,104
Program Fees	\$848,412
Public Support	\$507,360
Events	\$421,022
Contributions	\$406,066
Membership	\$356,251
Other	\$93,645
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,623,861</b>



### Expenses

Programs and Exhibits	\$2,061,441
General Administration	\$1,160,550
Fundraising	\$227,339
Other	\$11,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,461,024</b>

# KALEIDEUM FACTS & FIGURES



**214,952**

individuals visited Kaleideum during the 2024-25 fiscal year  
(FY 2023-24: 134,114)

**1,912**

families/individuals purchased memberships  
(FY 2023-24: 2,248)



**5,887**

adults played in the museum during Kaleideum After Dark 21+ monthly events  
(FY 2023-24: 1,232)



**21,361**

students explored the museum on a field trip  
(FY 2023-24: 12,078)

**214**

schools participated in field trips at Kaleideum  
(FY 2023-24: 144)

**52%**

of visiting schools have the Title 1 designation with high concentrations of low-income students  
(FY 2023-24: 49%)



**1,287**

campers participated in Camp Kaleideum  
(FY 2023-24: 810)



**49**

In this fiscal year, we served visitors from 49 states!

**25,889**

visitors used Museums for All, a reduced admission program.

*Community Investment Value: \$271,835*

**3,385**

visitors used Community Access library passes.

*Community Investment Value: \$45,175*

**9,349**

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools students visited for free on a field trip.

*Community Investment Value: \$65,436*

**5,638**

Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Title 1 School students received free educational programs.

*Community Investment Value: \$25,308*

**3,038**

educators visited through Kaleideum's free educator program.

*Community Investment Value: \$45,570*

**2,569**

visitors used the Blue Star Museums program for active duty military and their families.

*Community Investment Value: \$34,682*

**725**

families became Kaleideum members through the Novant Health New Parent program.



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[kaleideum.org](http://kaleideum.org)



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