I would like to thank our 2016 premier partners: Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, John Deere, Bravo Greater Des Moines, the WT and Edna M. Dahl Trust, and the Living History Farms Race for a terrific 2016 season.

Our season theme over the past year celebrated food and gardening. Did you know that according to a recent report by the National Gardening Association, *Garden to Table: A 5-year look at food Gardening in America*, more than a third of all households in America are growing food at home or in a community garden? That is roughly 42 million households! We had an array of hands-on activities that invited our guests to explore how food travels from field to fork and how that journey has changed over time. We also hosted a traveling exhibit entitled *Apron Strings*, as well, to tie to this season theme (pun intended).

This year, we received guests from 48 states and the District of Columbia along with guests from around the world representing 20 countries. Growth in attendance was strong across the board with a healthy increase of 10% from our gate, programming, and community events.

Behind the scenes, Living History Farms began the process of embarking upon a master plan facilitated by the consulting team of PGAV Destinations out of St. Louis, Missouri. PGAV Destinations has worked on many such planning projects including for: Old World Wisconsin, Conner Prairie, Fort Ticonderoga, The Kennedy Space Center, Patriots Point and Biltmore Estate. Our team at Living History Farms is very excited to develop the next phase of our beloved museum’s engagement with the community and to further enhance our visitor experiences.

There are so many donors and volunteers to thank for making 2016 so successful. To each of you, we are humbled by your generosity of time and treasure and appreciate your kindness. We look forward to seeing you all in 2017 when we explore the season theme celebrating small towns and rural communities. Until then...

Warm regards,
Ruth Haus
President
Education:

More than 29,000 learners of all ages participated in a program, tour, camp, or class through the education department in 2016.

To meet the season theme on food, day camp added a weeklong summer day camp on gardening and a new Family Garden Club was created. A truly gratifying sight during the Family Garden Club was watching the amazement in the eyes of the children as they dug up the potatoes that they had planted earlier in the year.

Thanks to the generous support of donors, including the Meier Bernstein Foundation, Living History Farms was able to award 27 scholarships for kids to attend day camp, the most ever in a single year.

LHF partnered with other organizations in 2016, both to deliver programming to our guests and to provide staff training. The Iowa Honey Producers Association provided programming and brought their demonstration bee hive for the garden-themed day camps and the spring homeschool day. Outreach staff traveled to branches of the Des Moines Public Library to offer programs on “Iowa 150 Years Ago,” to celebrate the DMPL’s 150th anniversary. Staff from the Iowa Agricultural Literacy Foundation and Reiman Gardens provided seminars to staff and interns on gardening and modern agriculture.

College students were able to gain real-world experience through job-shadowing and internship opportunities at Living History Farms in 2016. Two college students majoring in education from Yamanashi University in Japan observed spring break camp in action. Tyler Stokesbury, a history major from Simpson College, participated in an internship in the collections department. Blair Jones, student from University of Northern Iowa, had a summer-long internship with the special events department.

The State of Iowa Education Department rolled out a draft for new social studies curriculum for schools in September 2016, with the intent that they go into effect for the 2017-2018 school year. The 2016-2017 school year will be used to match new and existing programs to the new standards. Daniel Jones, Education Director, was a part of the Governor’s Iowa History Advisory Committee that made sure Iowa history had a strong presence in the new standards.

“Coming to Living History Farms is for students and teachers like receiving a present on Christmas. You unwrap it and play with it all year. When we were asked several years ago to cut expenses, my fellow 4th grade teachers helped me write a 4-page letter, saying that we were willing to give up every other out-of-the-classroom experience if we could keep the trip to Living History Farms.

Jenny Sinclair, LHF 2016 Teacher of the Year, from Norwalk, IA

“We were completely satisfied with our day - we have always had good experiences and have come to expect the high quality of programming you continue to provide!”

- Ankeny teacher commenting on her students‘ experience

“My child has a diagnosis on the autism spectrum and doesn’t like to get dirty. My child was so muddy from the creek walk that we had to use the hose to clean up. More importantly - my child loved every minute. Thank you!”

- Day Camp parent

“Not only was this career-shaping, but really life-changing. My time spent at LHF will be a time I reflect on throughout my life going forward. Lessons that I learned are not necessarily things you can read in a book, or even prepare for in training.”

- College Student, Internship

“Thanks for the opportunity for my wife and I to take part in this class. It was a wonderful time! It was informative, relaxed, and hands-on - exactly what we love!”

- Cooking class participant

“My son said this camp was his favorite of any camps that he has attended. He especially loved the counselors, songs, games, and the creek walk.”

- Day Camp parent
**Garden to Table:**

Throughout 2016, Living History Farms celebrated the many ways fresh produce makes its way from gardens to dinner tables. Museum guests shared in many “Garden to Table” hands-on experiences throughout the year including planting, weeding, harvesting and seed saving in the museum’s many flower and vegetable gardens.

The 1700 Ioway garden stole the show this year with crops of squash and blue flour corn. The 1850 Pioneer Farm offered special historic food tastings on two different event days, allowing guests to taste the 19th century farm staples hominy and pumpkin butter. At the 1900 Farm, canning and pickling foods, such as cherries, pears, tomatoes and kraut, were favorite demonstrations! Every Friday during the summer, one of the museum’s historic kitchens showcased an ingredient or food preparation technique during our Foodways Friday events. On July 9, all the historic kitchens participated in a food challenge, receiving a basket of “secret” seasonal ingredients from the garden.

Using the historic methods available to their site, each kitchen turned out a plate of historic happiness for three very lucky judges! In the town of Walnut Hill, the Flynn Mansion and Tangen Houses focused on period flower gardens, growing a variety of typical 19th century cutting flowers.

Pictured: Food challenge with secret ingredient of red and black raspberries, July 9.

In 2016, Living History Farms’ collection staff hosted the Mid-American Arts Alliance traveling exhibit, “Apron Strings: Ties to the Past”. This summer exhibit explored the ways aprons represented changes in domestic roles, work patterns, pop culture and even food preparation trends! In conjunction with the exhibit, guest presenter Madaline Tomlinson, actress and apron aficionado, visited LHF in June, sharing stories and costumed ironing demonstrations with museum goers. In the fall, Living History Farms presented a “Red, White, and Blue” themed historic textile show, emphasizing patriotic items in our collection and the ways in which red and blue dyes and fabrics have evolved in textile patterns. Restoration of the museum collections continued with work on historic chairs and furniture. The Living History Farms restoration specialists were pleased to showcase a newly restored turn of the century children’s wagon during the Family Christmas event.

Pictured (first row): Quilts from Red, White and Blue historic textile show, (second row, left to right): “Apron Strings: Ties to the Past”, LHF Board Member Bob Kurtz, with the restored children’s wagon at Family Christmas.
Community Events:

Attendance for community events organized by Living History Farms was very strong in 2016. More than 11,000 people came to the museum for our family events, including Easter, Halloween, and Christmas. New themed nights for Family Halloween proved very popular, especially our Princess and Superhero nights. We established a new partnership with the Puppy Jake Foundation, who brought out dogs being trained as companion animals for service veterans during Family Christmas, to help them become accustomed to working in crowds.

Living History Farms also continued to grow in popularity as a location for community leaders and organizations to hold their special events, with more than 100 such events occurring here during the year. This included more than 70 weddings and receptions. The museum continues to be a popular on-site location for filmmakers and commercial photographers. In August, Fourth Wall Films used the newly-opened 1700 Ioway Farm as a background for their latest historical documentary. Also in August, a film crew from California used the 1900 Farm and the Flynn Mansion in a series of campaign ads for Senator Chuck Grassley. In October, many sites in Walnut Hill, along with the Flynn Mansion, and the 1900 Farm were used in a photo shoot for Sir magazine based in Ames, Iowa.

The museum has also continued as a popular site for elected officials to hold meetings, including a couple of Congressman David Young’s “Coffee With My Congressman” constituent meetings and for athletic events, including the ever-popular Living History Farms Race. The largest rental event of the year was The Wall That Heals, a mobile exhibit created by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, which drew a crowd of over 8,000 over the course of five days. The 3/4 scale model wall was positioned on the front lawn of the museum and open to the public 24 hours each day for free. Hundreds of people and reporters were present on the day of its arrival, as nearly 150 motorcycles escorted the semi truck hauling the wall onto Living History Farms grounds.

Membership:

Living History Farms offers several membership options for our guests. The most popular is the TRI-Membership: 2016 is the 11th year that we have offered this unique opportunity for our members. The TRI-Membership provides unlimited experiences at Living History Farms and at our partner organizations: Blank Park Zoo and the Science Center of Iowa. More than 70% of our members select this option.

Once again, our popular Member Mondays program featured unique historic hands-on activities for member families to experience together. Each Member Monday offering included a make-and-take component, such as forging a hook in the Blacksmith Shop, printing seed packets at the Print Shop, or baking biscuits at the 1900 Farm.

Attendance Breakdown:

- Community Events: 35%
- Rental Events: 10%
- Programs: 35%
- Gate Admission: 55%
- Weddings & Receptions: 72.4%
- Indoor Events: 24.5%
- Outdoor Events: 3.1%

70% of members choose the TRI Membership option with LHF, BPZ, and SCI
Each week I’d look forward to Thursdays with the anticipation of a kid at Christmas. I’ve learned something every week, and it’s renewed a lost passion for history. And, I’ve made so many new friends throughout the season – great people who always encouraged and provided guidance along the way.

Kent Schlawin, New core historic interpreter

College students from Yamanashi University, Japan, job shadowed the education staff Momoko Sasano and Sae Nakada, two students studying to be teachers, were here for half of the spring break camp week, job shadowing the camp counselors. This opportunity came through the Iowa Sister States program. At the end of the week, they shared their traditions for celebrations and holidays with the campers, and taught the campers how to do origami.

898 volunteers
1,447 positions filled
18,377 hours contributed
Our community continued to be very generous in 2016, providing the support that made Living History Farms’ vast array of programs, events, initiatives, and operations possible. In all, 551 companies, foundations, and households (a 7.8% increase in the number of donors) contributed for annual operations, events and other sponsorships, for new tractor carts that transport visitors more safely and provide greater accessibility, for our new digital sign that allows the community easy access to information about our events and programs, and for several site improvements that were identified as priorities in our current strategic plan.

The community commitment to the museum is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that 75 percent of our 2015 donors chose to continue supporting us again in 2016—a retention rate that is 29 percentage points above the national average, according to the most recent GivingUSA report. At the same time, many of our donors either increased their gifts or became new donors in 2016. These new and increased donors are identified in blue below. Names in bold, indicate that gifts from those donors include support for our priority improvement projects.

We are very grateful to each of these donors.
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2016 Annual Donors:
Living History Farms / Annual Report

Endowment:

We have been able to build a $9 million endowment fund to help support ongoing operations, maintenance, and upkeep of Living History Farms. Many thanks to the donors listed below who have helped us move closer and closer to our long-term goal of a $10 million endowment for the museum.

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In honor of Dorothy H. Parry- for over 30 years of Volunteering
From her beneficiaries
**Living History Farms**

**Vision Statement**

Living History Farms will be a premiere destination for people to experience rural traditions and create memories.

**Mission Statement**

Living History Farms is an interactive outdoor history museum which educates, entertains and connects people of all ages to Midwestern rural life experiences.

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of Living History Farms is to make the public aware of the significance of agriculture in the development of America. Living History Farms will present the changes that have occurred in farming methods, concepts and technology and interpret the significance of those changes both in history and in modern life. By showing authentic models of farming, Living History Farms enables visitors to observe and participate in these processes and relate them to their lives.

**Structure**

Living History Farms is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) historical, educational museum. LHF is a private non-profit. LHF is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

**Location**

Living History Farms is located at 11121 Hickman Road, exit #125 from the combined Interstates 35/80, in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Fun Fact**

Since 1970, Living History Farms has enjoyed sharing its mission with more than 5 million visitors.

---

**Quick Stats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Summer Opened</th>
<th>Acres Land Size</th>
<th>Working Farms 1700, 1850, 1900</th>
<th>Historic and Modern Buildings 47</th>
<th>Miles Roads 6.5</th>
<th>Artifacts 19,000+</th>
<th>Professional Staff FTE 40</th>
<th>Volunteers 898</th>
<th>Members 2400+</th>
<th>Visitors 110,000+</th>
<th>Countries 20</th>
<th>States 49</th>
<th>Students Served 29,000+</th>
<th>Donors 551</th>
<th>Operating Expense Budget $2.4 Million</th>
<th>Fundraising Need $836,000</th>
<th>Operating Budget from Fundraising 35%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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**Why do we need sponsors?**

At Living History Farms, our aim is to provide accessible and meaningful opportunities for our community. To keep our programs and events affordable, we never charge our attendees the full expense of an event or program. **No event pays for itself.**

1409 people attended Applefest and Drake Head Start Day in 2016, the most popular event of the season.

Living History Farms hosts **186** community events and programs annually.

A $1500 Program Sponsorship helps pay for **88** guest experiences.

The average admission price to attend an event at Living History Farms is **$6**.

The cost per person for Living History Farms to execute a community event is **$23**.

We need your help to provide enriching experiences for our shared community!