Another season has quickly come and gone for us at Living History Farms!

There were many important achievements during 2018, which are reflected throughout this annual report.

First and foremost, we could not have done this without the generosity of our community providing support through their talents, time, and treasures.

Our season theme this year focused on simple pleasures and historic skills. Since this was an election year, we also hosted a wonderful traveling exhibit entitled Sign of the Times: The Great American Political Poster (1844-2012). We also featured a new World War I day camp program in collaboration with the Iowa Gold Star Museum and the State Historical Society of Iowa to commemorate the centennial anniversary of the “war to end all wars.”

This year, we received guests from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and guests representing 17 other countries. We have also seen more than 33% growth in our member-households since 2016.

We held a host of new events this year including: History Happy Hour, Living History Farms Kids Trail Run, Heritage Skills Expo, and History Through the Lens. We also celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Living History Farms cross country race.

In addition, our endowment continues to grow with donations from more than a hundred donors and asset growth of more than 15% since 2016.

The economic impact of Living History Farms continues to grow as well. Did you know that Living History Farms has an economic impact of $5.7 million dollars to our community? This includes 178 FTE jobs in the community, local government revenue of more than $262,000, and state government revenue of more than $338,000.

As we look ahead to 2019, we have two major projects planned that we have spent this year actively fundraising for: A feasibility study for a potential capital campaign and the renovation of the red barn for collections storage and public exhibit space. We are very excited to begin our conversation with the community about how we can provide even more opportunities to learn about history and rural life.

We look forward to next season, which is just around the corner, in which we will focus on the interpretive theme of Land Stewardship in conjunction with the 40th anniversary of Saint Pope John Paul II’s visit to Living History Farms!

Warm regards,
Ruth Haus
President
More than 26,000 learners of all ages engaged with Living History Farms’ education programs in 2018. These learners participated in programs including K-12 school tours, explorations, outreaches, day camps, homeschool days, historic skills classes, pre-school literacy programs as well as our family garden club. A few highlights from this year include:

- Living History Farms partnered with the Iowa Gold Star Museum and the State Historical Society of Iowa to offer a cooperative camp on Iowa’s involvement in World War I.
- Our school to work partnership with Johnston High School provided valuable internships for students, helping them to explore future careers.
- Darice Pamperin was honored as our 2018 Teacher of the Year. She is a 1st grade teacher at St. Francis Catholic School in West Des Moines.

**FEEDBACK FROM SOME OF THE YEAR’S EDUCATION PROGRAMS:**

“This aligns so well with our curriculum as we study early communities, westward expansion, migration, and farming history.” *3rd Grade teacher, Indianola, IA*

“Our boys had a great time at LHF camp. Both shared new learning when they were picked up and were excited to go back the next day. They loved the creek walk, the animals, the songs, and their counselors. Well done! We will be back next year.” *Day Camp parent*

“I enjoyed learning about the science behind the history of blacksmithing, and actually getting to forge metal. Great instructors!” *participant in the Blacksmith Basics class*
The historic interpreters at Living History Farms celebrated “Simple Pleasures” over the course of the 2018 program season. Hands-on activities, demonstrations, and event days focused on the simple tasks our ancestors did every day that brought them pleasure or are pleasurable to us now. Our tradespeople invited guests to try their hand at type-setting in the Advocate printing shop, making basic embroidery stitches in the Millinery and sorting broomcorn at the Broom works. Weeding the gardens at our historic farms kept many guests busy this year. Pioneer farmers worked their garden to provide food for their families, but a well-weeded garden is satisfying to any age. Museum visitors felt their own pride in a clean row of peas and the feel of a wooden hoe in their hands. The pleasures of good seasonal food were a highlight this summer; every Friday in June and July, historic kitchens demonstrated different historic cooking methods and ingredients. The Flynn Mansion held a lawn picnic in July, showing off their 1870s upscale picnicking style.

The hand-work activities were brought together in a new event in October, 2018. The Heritage Skills Expo day featured many hand-work and farm skills that have survived to the present day. Local spinners and weavers, members of the Iowa Ferrier Association, Victorian hair artists, and primitive skills demonstrators provided guests with insights into their crafts throughout the museum. Historic interpreters shared demonstrations and insights into 19th century life that are sometimes overlooked—such as how to set up and use a smoke house to preserve meat, how to roast and grind green coffee beans by hand, and the many aspects of making Norwegian lefse. These activities showcased the pleasure craftsmen and women enjoyed in their tasks, but reminded guests that not everything was truly “simple” in the past.
Living History Farms proudly exhibited five of the museum’s twentieth century tractors in the new Tractor Walk display near the Wallace Exhibit Center, including a Farmall Super M, an Allis-Chalmers WD45, and a Fordson Model F.

We shared three mini-exhibits of treasured items from the textile collection in the Flynn Mansion. Piecework examples, historic sewing bags, and clothing showcased the skill needed for even plain sewing in the past. Embroidery pieces and crochet items were also out for viewing, along with needlework tools and vintage threads.

Behind-the-Scenes Collection Tours were offered to show how these fragile historic textiles and other 3-dimensional items are stored at the museum. The Living History Farms digital collection database on our website now features more than 170 objects.

A traveling exhibit from the Mid-American Arts Alliance titled Sign of the Times: The Great American Political Poster, 1844-2012 delighted guests with examples of artwork and campaign slogans from the 1800s through the 21st century. This was a timely exhibit, coinciding with Iowa’s gubernatorial election cycle and gave guests a new appreciation for political art and advertising.

Thanks to generous support from John Deere, collections restorers rebuilt and detailed a 1910s John Deere manure spreader, returning this item to active use at the 1900 Horse-Powered Farm.
COMMUNITY EVENTS

More than 12,000 attended special events offered to the community by Living History Farms during 2018. These included popular holiday traditions (Family Easter, Independence Day, eight nights of Family Halloween and Family Christmas) and harvest celebrations, such as Grain Harvest and Applefest. New in 2018 were the inaugural Living History Farms Kids Trail Run, our first History Happy Hour, Heritage Skills Expo, and a new photography event, History Through the Lens.

2018 also saw the expansion of the Living History Farms’ Overnight Adventures Program in partnership with the Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa council. Over 70 scouts and chaperones participated in cooking demonstrations, historic games, and a lantern lit tour of Walnut Hill after dark.

Many families, businesses, and associations also hosted their own events and celebrations at Living History Farms, notably:

- The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce’s GenYP annual kick-off event in January.
- A two-day retreat for the Sierra Club in April.
- A Polk County Farm Bureau Board meeting in June.
- An employee celebration of West Bank’s 150th anniversary in June, which included a museum tour for more than 200 company employees and family members.
- The fourth year of the India Day Festival, presented by the Indo American Association of Iowa, held on the museum’s front lawn in August.
- The second year of the Unique Mustangs Car Club’s annual car show, which brought more than 100 classic Mustangs to our front lawn.
- More than 25 weddings, wedding receptions, and a bridal shower.
- A three-day series of focus groups, conducted by Mid-Iowa Interviewing in October.
- While the Church of the Way builds a new church, the congregation has used the Church of the Land for their weekly services.
2018 was the 13th year of the TRI Membership Program, a unique collaboration between Living History Farms, the Science Center of Iowa, and the Blank Park Zoo. This rapidly growing program continues to grow, due to the excellent value it offers for local families. The TRI Membership program provides unlimited attendance to all three attractions, discounts on popular programs such as Day Camps and Historic Dinners, and many other attractive benefits. In all, more than 2,600 local families were members of Living History Farms in 2018.

The more than 2,600 households who were members of Living History Farms during 2018 helped support our mission to educate, entertain, and connect people of all ages to Midwestern rural life experiences. Here at Living History Farms, membership also has its privileges, including:

- Free unlimited general admission to Living History Farms for one year.
- Free admission to special events during general season, such as Independence Day, Historic Baseball, Grain Harvest, Applefest, our History Happy Hour series, and more.
- Free monthly Member Morning activities throughout our general season.
- Discount at the MarketPlace Museum Store, Summer Kitchen Snack Shop, and on the use of Living History Farms rental facilities.
- Discount and early registration for Historic Dinners, Day Camp, and Historic Skills Classes.
- Discount admission for select special events outside of the general season, including Family Easter, Family Halloween, and Family Christmas.
- Free or discounted admission to more than 200 other museums across the country, as well as discounted admission at select outdoor history museums.
- Subscription to Living History Farms’ monthly member updates, with trivia and prizes.
- Option to add memberships to the Blank Park Zoo and Science Center of Iowa for additional benefits.
- Discounts from community partners: Hotel Renovo, Machine Shed Restaurant, and Spaghetti Works Des Moines.

In 2017, Living History Farms launched a new partnership called, “Library Discovery Pass,” testing it with the Grimes Public Library. In 2018, we expanded the program to include seven additional local government partners of Bravo Greater Des Moines (Altoona, Bondurant, Carlisle, Johnston, Polk City, Urbandale and West Des Moines), along with other community library systems.
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Ruth Haus

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Anne Marie Finkelstein
Evan Hoyt

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Jaime Nicolet
Sammy Smithson
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STAFF TIME BREAKDOWN
BY DEPARTMENT

% OF TOTAL

- Administration: 8%
- Community Events: 3%
- Development: 7%
- Education & Day Camp: 11%
- Guest Services & Collections: 10%
- Interpretation & Collections: 10%
- Maintenance: 5%
- Marketing & Communications: 3%
HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2018:

“Living History Farms welcomed a group of English as a Second Language students from Valley High School to volunteer in the fall of 2018. The staff at LHF was kind and considerate as they gave the high school students a tour of the 1900 Farm. The staff and students had the chance to share experiences working with wood-burning stoves. The high school students divided their time between stacking cut firewood and replacing hay in the pig-sties. The day after the students visited LHF, they wrote a reflection on their experience. One student wrote, ‘the best thing [about LHF] was it reminded me of back home because it’s similar. I enjoyed helping with the little wood. It makes me happy because I like to help people.’ Many of the students were not born in the United States. Some were born in Myanmar, others from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Eritrea. The group looks forward to working with Living History Farms in the future.”

- Ann Krois, Valley High School ESL Teacher

“We felt that your program is one of the best for helping these teens learn life skills and have recommended it to a lot of kids. Thanks again!!”

- Angie Gearhart, parent of camp Junior Counselor

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Volunteer Dan Wagner making apple butter during Applefest.
Community support for Living History Farms’ annual operations continued to be very strong in 2018, with 592 companies, foundations and especially—as shown below—many individual households donating generously to make our vast array of programs, events, and initiatives possible. These donors provided experiential education for students from all corners of Iowa, sponsored events from the community, extended our operating capacity, renovated the Church of the Land and will assist us in a feasibility study in May 2019 to determine the scope of a potential capital campaign.

Community commitment to this museum is perhaps best evidenced by the fact that 74 percent of our 2017 annual donors chose to renew their support again in 2018—a retention rate that continues to run nearly 30 percentage points above the 45.5 percent national average reported by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. At the same time, we added 149 new donors to our Living History Farms family. Names in blue in the list that follows either increased their support for Living History Farms or became new donors in 2018. Those listed in bold indicate that their gifts included support for our special projects, including the Church of the Land and our Feasibility Study.

We are very grateful to every one of the donors listed here for their support, both through cash and in-kind gifts. We had 138 in-kind donors in 2018 with the value of their gifts totaling $213,000.
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In Memory of Clyde and Phyllis Wood, longtime farmers of Guthrie County
Lois and Gayle Strickler

In Memory of Pat Wood
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COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The following partner organizations collaborated with LHF during 2018 to expand the cultural opportunities we offer the community. We thank them for their partnership.

Achieving Maximum Potential (AMP)  
Annelise Winery  
Aspen Athletic Clubs  
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Black Silo Coffee  
Blank Park Zoo  
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The Cellar at White Oak  
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The Cheese Shop  
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Penoach Winery  
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Polk County 4-H Rabbit Owners  
Polk County Ag in the Classroom  
Polk County Master Gardeners  
Puppy Up Iowa  
Receptive Sound  
Rogue Sweets (now Gaia’s Gairden)  
Science Center of Iowa  
Soldier Creek Winery  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
Story Book Adventures  
Sudden Art  
Sustainable Iowa Land Trust  
Train Wreck Winery  
Traveling Photobooth  
Two Rivers Story Spinners  
Urban Dreams  
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White Willow Events  
Wild Tree  
WW Homestead Dairy  
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Your Private Bartender  
Youth and Shelter Services (YSS)  
Youth Emergency Services & Shelter Services of Iowa (YESS)
ENDOWMENT

ENDOWMENT: THE FUTURE OF LIVING HISTORY FARMS

To ensure that this unique experiential museum is here for future generations, LHF set a goal in 2009 of growing our endowment to $10 million by the end of 2025. Thanks to the generous donors listed below, we achieved that mark eight years early, before the end of 2017. At the end of 2018, with the dip in the markets, our endowment total dropped slightly to $9,581,601.

MORE THAN $1 MILLION
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$500,000 AND ABOVE
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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.

Objectives
Living History Farms seeks to enrich public understanding and to engage the public in consideration of the significance of past and present issues in agriculture and rural life.

Living History Farms seeks to re-create the daily routines of representative historical years by means of “living history” interpretation. To accomplish this, LHF constructs authentic simulations of typical historical farm sites and a small town from time periods that illustrate major changes in agricultural technology, procedures and rural life.

Living History Farms seeks to promote the history of agriculture and rural life through the enrichment of the educational curricula of preschool through college and adult education in both traditional and non-traditional settings. 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.

Living History Farms is featured in the NY Times Bestseller, 1000 Places To See Before You Die in the US and Canada, available in the Marketplace Museum Store.