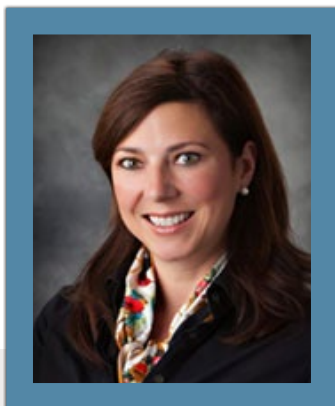




LIVING HISTORY FARMS ANNUAL REPORT 2020

LIVING
HISTORY FARMS



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we reflect upon the unprecedented year we have experienced together, Living History Farms is filled with gratitude. This year presented many challenges, but it was also filled with many blessings.

After many years of planning and focus on improving the visitor experience, Living History Farms was awarded museum accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. This puts us in elite company with only 3 percent of all museums in the country meeting the commitment to standards and best practices in our field. The timing of this award came as we celebrated our 50th anniversary as a living history museum.

Indeed, we are living history each and every day as we confront the realities of the world-wide COVID pandemic. Unlike many other arts and culture non-profit organizations around the nation, we were able to re-open our doors after a two-month closure by the state government. Other museums have not been as fortunate. In fact, a survey by the American Alliance of Museum indicates that the pandemic may claim the closure of nearly a third of all museums in the nation. When I think about how integral Living History Farms has been in educating hundreds of thousands of students in our 50-year history, it is virtually impossible to imagine our community without Living History Farms.

While we long for the days of our “old normal” we are working diligently to continue to provide opportunities for learning both virtually and in-person. This summer, we successfully hosted more than 650 kids for in-person summer camp without incident, thanks to all of the new safety measures and cleaning protocols we put into place.

We even hosted guests from 40 states around the country who came to tour. As the world health crisis emerged, we immediately began cost-savings measures and secured a PPP loan to allow the staff to provide the best visitor experience possible. Yes, we have met many challenges this year head-on, thanks to your generosity.

Because of you, we are not done yet! We are grateful that we have been able to serve our community for the past 50 years and we look forward to doing so for the next 50 years and beyond, even as we explore new and alternative ways to fulfill our mission.

It is a privilege for Living History Farms to continue to serve our mission to educate and entertain people of all ages about our shared agricultural heritage. Thank you for giving us the latitude to pilot new programs, develop virtual educational content, and provide in-person programming in appropriate, safe and socially distanced ways. I hope you will join us this winter for an upcoming event, Historic Dinner, or historic skills class and come back to tour in May 2021. We always look forward to having you here!

Sincerely,

Ruth Haus, President

2020 HIGHLIGHTS



10 *Behind-the-Scenes*
videos created in spring

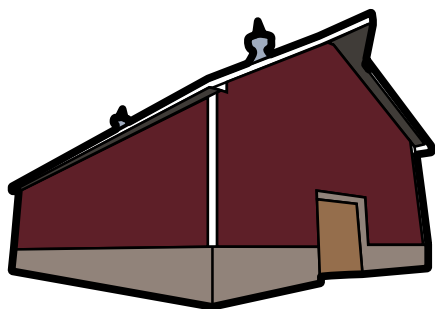
2 **VIRTUAL OUTREACH**
programs developed in fall



11 weeks
of **Summer**
Day Camp



NEW Red Barn Gallery & Collections Facility Opened



on display: Living History Farms' 50th Anniversary Exhibit

6 **NIGHTS**
OF SAFE
ACTIVITIES



at **FAMILY**
Halloween

3 working farms
19,000+ *artifacts*
500+ acres

5 **BUILDINGS** GOT
new exterior paint
- AND REPAIRS -



- Tangen Home - Flynn Barn - Print Shop -
- Carriage House at Doctor's Office -
- Red Barn Gallery -

5 **Native American Artists**
featured in an exhibit over the summer:

Iowa ReImagined



SUPPORTING
our **COMMUNITY**

Host Site for: COVID-19
Testing & Drive-thru
Holiday Light Display

EDUCATION

The education department was able to deliver exceptional programming to the community in new and different ways that both served the mission of the museum while also addressing the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Museum staff collaborated to develop a virtual outreach program, focused on the culture of the 1700 era Ioway tribe for 2nd-5th grade students to access remotely. Thanks to a grant from Connecting Kids and Culture, Living History Farms was able to provide this virtual content to K-12 schools in 27 districts, free of charge. A second virtual program, which will educate students on the agricultural heritage and realities of life for Iowa farmers in the 1850s will be launched in the first quarter of 2021.

Summer Day Camp ran successfully for 11 weeks of in-person experiences, following the guidance and recommendations from the American Camp Association, and other local, state, and federal organizations. We were able to provide in-person programming for the Montessori Children's House in Clive, Iowa for 12 weeks, introducing preschool-aged children to farmers and farming. We also expanded our popular Barnyard Readers Preschool Program, with new topics such as ice cream and pollinators, and taught over forty Historic Skills Classes for adults and families in the fall, all in-person.

Living History Farms was awarded the Friend of Iowa Social Studies Award by the Iowa Council for the Social Studies during the Farmstasia event on October 2, 2020.

Photos top to bottom: 1) Virtual Outreach Program about the culture of the 1700-era Ioway Tribe; 2) Participants enjoy an evening historic skills class; 3) Living History Farms receives the Friend of Social Studies Award



FEEDBACK FROM SOME OF THE YEAR'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS:

"I wanted to take an opportunity to publicly thank Living History Farms for diligent work to make summer camps safe and fun for children. Each year, my children look forward to exploring nature, learning about the past, and making new friends at Living History Farms' camp."

Amber G., Letter to the editor, Des Moines Register

"The hearth cooking class was really unique and I loved getting to learn a new skill that I would not be able to learn anywhere else. The instructor was wonderful and very knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and encouraging."

Kathleen B., Participant in Historic Skills Class

INTERPRETATION

Living History Farms interpretation programs had a slightly different appearance, both physically and programmatically in 2020. In January, the town of Walnut Hill made the move from representing 1875 to the year 1876. For Walnut Hill, this is a new opportunity to tell the story of the nation's centennial year, with all of the new inventions and new ideas which debuted that year.

The 2020 season theme was a celebration of the "Faces of Farming." Events and demonstrations emphasized the role of average people in making history. At the pioneer wedding in June, interpreters talked about the impact of 19th century immigration trends on farming families by packing our newly restored prairie schooner wagon for a trip west. Independence Day celebrations in Walnut Hill in July focused on the excitement of the 1876 Centennial. Ioway Culture Day featured expert flint-knapper, Pat Hashman. With a nod to the 2020 election cycle, we also celebrated the impact everyday Iowans had on the political process with our own Election Day. Walnut Hill held a recreated election for town mayor, featuring debates from two interpreters representing candidates from the 1870s era. In recognition of the 100th anniversary of passage of the 19th Amendment granting women suffrage, interpreters made a point to bring the positions of 19th century women to the front of the town election process.

Physically, many of our historic structures received new paint and restoration work through the season. New paint appeared on the Tangen House, Flynn Barn, and Advocate Print Shop. The new color scheme on the Tangen House reflects research into the carpenter gothic architecture style and historic colors.

Guests to our Historic Dinners programs enjoyed meals representative of family celebrations, at the 1876 Tangen House and 1900 Farmhouse, and a more elaborate 9-course special occasion meal at the Flynn Mansion. Our 2020 program season also included increased emphasis on protecting our guests, staff, and historic spaces.

Living History Farms also said good-bye to one of our treasured staff members. Long time Millinery and Period Clothing Supervisor Laura Poresky passed away in September. Laura dedicated years of talent to creating the clothing worn by LHF historical interpreters and researched and curated several exhibitions of historic quilts and textiles from Living History Farms collections. She will be deeply missed.

Photos top to bottom: 1) Masked historic interpreters pose for a photo in the 1876 Town of Walnut Hill; 2) Prairie Schooner featured at Pioneer Wedding; 3) Tangen Home was repainted with historic colors; 4) Longtime Millinery and Period Clothing Supervisor, Laura Poresky



COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS

The 2020 exhibits calendar began in February with *Keeping Warm in the Midwest*, an exhibit featuring a variety of quilts and other cold-weather artifacts from the historic collection. The exhibit also featured demonstrations of a variety of textile arts including hand-quilting techniques.

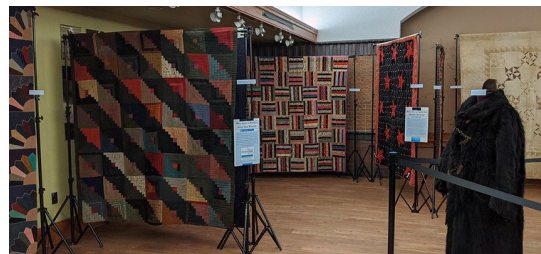
Later, in July, the exhibition *Reimagining Iowa: Five Ioway Artists* opened in the Visitor Center Gallery in conjunction with Ioway Culture Day. Featuring eight works by five members of the Ioway tribe, the exhibition remained on display until October.

In June, we celebrated the restoration of the Red Barn Gallery, with a ribbon cutting ceremony by the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce. The main level is now a secure, climate-controlled exhibition space. The gallery's debut exhibition celebrated the Farms' first fifty years and featured memories of former staff, volunteers, and guests. The Gallery is a new stop for visitors in Walnut Hill and is the new home for our exhibits program. The building's second floor is now a secure, climate-controlled collections storage facility containing over 500 museum artifacts.

Speaking of artifacts, two important items received some extra attention this year. Our 1976 *Prairie Schooner*, which was part of the nation-wide Bicentennial Wagon Train Pilgrimage to Pennsylvania in 1976, was beautifully restored and was on display for our Pioneer Wedding and 4th of July events. And the portrait of Martin Flynn, which hangs above the mantle in the Flynn Mansion parlor, underwent conservation work at the Gerald Ford Conservation Center. The painting was carefully cleaned and has also been reframed.

Living History Farms participated in the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation's Conservation Assessment Program (CAP). The program included a two-day site visit from a collections conservator and an historic preservation architect. The assessors spent time examining our historic buildings, historic collection, and storage facilities. Their report and professional recommendations will be instrumental as we develop our next strategic plan for 2022-2024.

Photos top to bottom: 1) *Keeping Warm in the Midwest* exhibit; 2) *Square the Circle the Square* by Reuben IronHorse Kent in *Reimagining Iowa: Five Ioway Artists* exhibit; 3) *Prairie Schooner*; 4) Ribbon Cutting for Opening of Red Barn Gallery



COMMUNITY EVENTS

More than 83,000 people took part in community events hosted at Living History Farms during 2020.

In February, Living History Farms debuted Caucus for Cookies, a new event created to educate children about the caucus process while enjoying sweet treats. The Visitor Center also served as an official caucus location for precinct Urbandale-11.

Special events were paused in late March, following CDC and government restrictions in response to the pandemic. Upon reopening the museum in June, visitors enjoyed several unique events over the summer including our historic Independence Day celebration, Pioneer Wedding, Historic Baseball games, Ioway Culture Day, Applefest, and more. In October, we welcomed trick-or-treaters for six nights of safe, socially distanced activities during Family Halloween.

In addition to Living History Farms' events, several families, businesses and community members held events on the property throughout the year. Since July, Health Gauge has been using Living History Farms' convenient and well-known location to set up their COVID-19 testing operations.

Living History Farms hosted 6 weddings and 3 receptions/celebrations, while following proclamations from the state government.

In August, Heritage Action for America hosted a town hall featuring Vice President Mike Pence, Dr. Deborah Birx, Governor Kim Reynolds, and other local political and law enforcement officials.

For the fourth year in a row, the Unique Mustangs Car Club brought their annual car show to the front lawn in the summer.

And finally, at the end of the year, we hosted Santa's Rock 'N' Lights by All Community Events on the east side of the Living History Farms property, from November 27-January 3; a safe, drive-through holiday light display coordinated with music.



Photos top to bottom: 1) Historic Baseball Game; 2) Family Halloween; 3) Apple Egg Rolls at Applefest; 4) Santa's Rock 'N' Lights

STAFF

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Barbara Hanson
Ruth Haus

Collections, Archives, & Exhibits

Lindsey Smith
Luis Vasquez

Community Relations

Bill Allen
Staci Bennett
Sherridee Clark
Bethany Connon
Brittany Glass
Gary Link
Jeff Ohrtman
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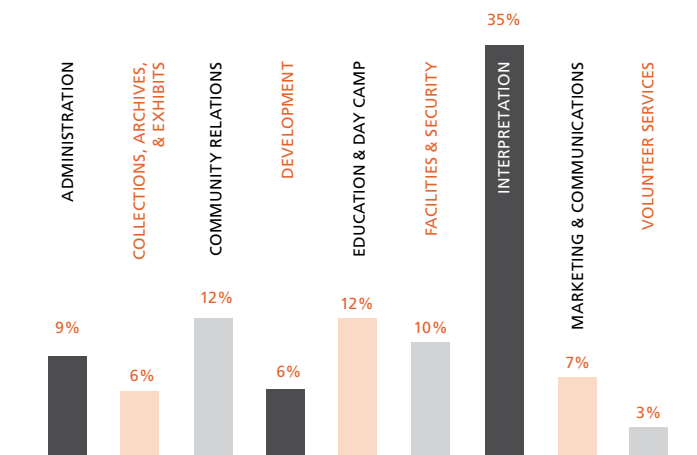
Amy Day
Kate Meyer

Volunteer Services

Jan Milroy

STAFF TIME BREAKDOWN BY DEPARTMENT

% OF TOTAL



Congratulations to Dean Boots and Jan Milroy on their retirements in 2020!

From the building of the Drug Store and Gazebo to the final restoration of Flynn Mansion, Dean enjoyed working on many projects to keep history alive during his 27 years at LHF. Jan is leaving a legacy of fostering invaluable relationships with volunteers and connecting volunteers' skill sets with the needs of the organization, leading to tens of thousands of volunteer opportunities during her 31 year tenure. We thank them both for their decades of service to Living History Farms!

VOLUNTEERS

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Riann van Dyk – Vice Chairman, Alura Animal Health and Nutrition
Randi Marsh – Secretary, retired from Principal Financial Group
Tony Aldridge – Treasurer, FBL Financial
Rachel Geilenfeld, Sukup Manufacturing Co.
Gina Graham, Principal Financial Group
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Chris Nelson, Homes Murph & Associates
Steve Owenson, John Deere Financial
Dr. Stephen Smith, retired – DuPont Pioneer/
Iowa State University – Adjunct Professor
Ruth Haus – Ex Officio

BOARD COMMITTEES

Audit Subcommittee
Executive Committee
Finance Committee
Nominating/Governance Committee
Strategic Planning Committee

Our volunteers expressed their thoughts on hearing Living History Farms had received AAM accreditation:

- “What wonderful news. Many thanks to the staff who have worked so diligently to meet accreditation standards.”
- “This is fabulous! Many people have worked numerous years to maintain a top-notch museum. While we always knew it was outstanding, it’s a true pat on the back to receive this honor.”
- “Congratulations to LHF! I am proud to be a small part of this organization.”



**364
volunteers**



**593 positions
filled**



**8,223 hours
contributed**

We thank all the corporate and service groups that assisted us with a variety of projects. In October, a group of 15 students from Iowa State University’s “Pay It Forward” organization came out to help paint one of our buildings and assist with set-up for our Halloween event. Afterwards their representative wrote, “We were happy to come volunteer and we had a lot of fun! Our participants definitely enjoyed the painting and setting up Halloween decorations. We appreciated having activities where we can talk and get to know one another so this was a great opportunity. We look forward to the next chance we will have to volunteer at Living History Farms.”



HIGHLIGHT FROM 2020:

Every year we highlight core volunteers that have been with us for 5, 10, and more years. This year for the first time we honored a volunteer who has been with us 40 years! Bev Firkins has been a historic interpreter in our Schoolhouse and has assisted with a variety of special events over the years. What an asset to our museum. Thank you, Bev!



2020 ANNUAL SUPPORT

Thanks to incredible supporters like YOU, we surpassed our ambitious goal for annual operating support, a goal that was set well before we had ever heard of COVID-19! This was largely the result of increased government support resulting from the CARES Act, passed in March, and the wonderful generosity of the many individuals listed below.

During 2020, government support accounted for 35 percent of our contributed revenue, compared to 16 percent in 2019. The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, through two of its divisions (the Iowa Arts Council and the State Historical Society of Iowa), administered critical pandemic relief funding for us and many other Iowa organizations. We also were fortunate to receive new grants administered by Bravo Greater Des Moines/Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines and Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area. We are very grateful for the important work of each of these organizations in keeping Iowa's arts, culture, and heritage sector alive and vibrant.

At the same time, individual support grew from 76 percent in 2019 to 85 percent in 2020. This was fueled by increased gifts from nearly one-fourth of our individual donors, an amazing show of support! Look for the names in **bold** in the annual support list that follows to see those who either increased their support for the museum during 2020 or were new donors. We are also very grateful that 55 percent of our 2019 donors chose to renew their support (12 percentage points better than the national average for donor retention*).

Thank you to every one the of the following individuals, companies, foundations, and organizations for keeping history alive at our museum throughout 2020!

* From latest Fundraising Effectiveness Report

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OF **DONORS ARE**
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The following organizations collaborated with LHF during 2020 to expand the cultural enrichment opportunities we provide the community. We thank them for their partnership.

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THE FUTURE OF LIVING HISTORY FARMS

The following individuals and organizations have made generous endowment gifts, to ensure that this unique experiential museum is here for future generations and continues to provide unique cultural enrichment experiences for our community and its visitors.

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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.

FUN FACTS

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*.

QUICK STATS

1970	Museum Opened
500+	Acres
3	Working Farms: 1700, 1850, 1900
47	Historic & Modern Buildings
6.5	Miles of Roads
19,000+	Artifacts
106,000+	Visitors, from 40 states
2,107	Member Households
4,659	Member Attendance
4,108	Students Served
550	Donors
31 FTE	Professional Staff
364	Volunteers
\$2.2 Million	Actual Operating Expense
\$616,500	Fundraising Need
25%	Operating Budget from Fundraising