



OCEAN DISCOVERY INSTITUTE

*young lives transformed
through science*

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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Dear Friends,

Among the things I treasure most is the community we have built at Ocean Discovery. Our community is a family — believing that each other can succeed in improving our lives and our world, supporting each other through the inevitable difficulties we face, and loving each other because of the unique perspectives we each bring. We are bound together with the common purpose of inspiring the next generation of diverse science leaders who will gain financial freedom and change the future of science.

What has shaped this shared determination in us? For so many, it is the inspiration of our mothers and fathers. For me, that is certainly the case — my mother showcasing that I should do everything I can during this life and my father guiding me to believe it's my job on Earth to make things better. As 2021 came to end, my father's life did as well and we said goodbye to a much-loved human being. He deeply loved the work we do at Ocean Discovery and got so much joy from being part of and contributing to our "family." In the early days, he cleaned the field station in Baja to make it ready for students. Later he acted as a medic at habitat restoration events, walked neighborhoods in support of educational propositions, asked questions of students, and was among the first to donate for whatever was needed. One of his last acts of service was to donate to begin an endowment that will sustain the impacts we create together beyond all of our lifetimes.

We learn from those before us and become the ones to shape the future. We see that every moment provides an opportunity to do more. In 2021, we responded to the COVID-19 crisis by engaging more young people than ever before in robust multi-day learning experiences. We used the extraordinary Living Lab you made possible to provide safe, impactful in-person and virtual programming.

Our Ocean Discovery family is united by our shared values. You and I, we love learning. We choose leadership. We believe in community. We stand for justice. And we imagine possibilities.

With love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shana Fisher". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Shana" being more prominent than the last name "Fisher".

Founder & Executive
Director



YOUNG LIVES TRANSFORMED THROUGH SCIENCE

OUR MISSION & VISION

To inspire the next generation of science leaders, Ocean Discovery Institute creates learning experiences for young people traditionally excluded from science due to race, income status, and educational opportunity.

Our students will join high-paying fields, break generational poverty, and change the future of science.

WE LOVE LEARNING

Because we find joy in discovery
and the confidence it creates



WE CHOOSE LEADERSHIP

Because the world needs us
to make a difference



WE BELIEVE IN COMMUNITY

Because we count on one another and
together, we are more powerful



WE STAND FOR JUSTICE

Because we believe in equitable
education and opportunity



WE IMAGINE POSSIBILITIES

Because we hold an unshakeable
belief in our future



Ocean Discovery's values guide our students, families, team, and supporters

OUR COMMUNITY

Our students reflect the
diversity of our community.

59% HISPANIC/LATINO

17% ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER

11% BLACK

10% WHITE

2% MULTIRACIAL

1% OTHER

100%

of students are from
City Heights, San Diego, an
urban, low-income, and
racially diverse community

91%

of these young people are
eligible for federal free or
reduced meal programs



THE PROBLEM

Too many young people are excluded from opportunities due to race, income status, and educational access.

These young people don't have the opportunity to experience science or encounter representative role models. This significant opportunity gap means that students don't believe science is something they can do, or a scientist is someone they can be. These young people are unprepared to pursue college and careers in science, keeping them out of high-paying science fields. Because of this, generational poverty continues, and we lack the leadership needed to make discoveries that protect all people and our planet.



Black, Latinx, American Indian, and Alaska Natives make up 30% of our workforce, but comprise only 11% of science and engineering doctorates.



OUR SOLUTION

Ocean Discovery Institute provides continuous science opportunities, paired with mentoring and the tools to overcome barriers so that young people unlock their potential.

All programming is 100% tuition-free and provided to a young person from kindergarten to career.



5,901



22,262

In the 2020-2021 school year, 5,901 students participated in 22,262 hours of programming.

OUR IMPACT

Ocean Discovery alumni break the cycle of poverty and become the science leadership we need to make our world a better place.

Our young people believe a scientist is someone they can be, they achieve in science, and they become leaders who commit to science and encourage others. Their achievements resulted in Ocean Discovery's receipt of The White House's *Presidential Award for Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring*.

During the 2021calendar year

- Through our In-School Program, 17% more students met or exceeded the English & math standards compared to their peers at similar schools.
- 71% of students in our Out-of-School Program demonstrated belief that they can do science and become a scientist, notable in a community where less than 5% of residents will pursue and obtain science or science-related careers.
- The 63 students participated in our Leadership Program had an average GPA of 3.0 as compared the average 2.4 GPA at the local high school.
- Through our Leadership Program, 90% of participants to date have earned a college degree within six years. 77% of these students earned science and related degrees and 42% attained careers in these fields.



“I felt like an actual scientist when we were making a design for a robot that could clean out oceans and then building it with blocks. I think I want to pursue a career just like that.”

- 5TH GRADE STUDENT



OUR PROGRAMS

IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The In-School Program reaches thousands of kindergarten-7th grade students from 11 elementary and two middle schools each year. Students receive hands-on science lessons, exposure to science careers and mentors, and field trips to the coast and the Living Lab. During lessons, students explore wetlands, and tide pools, and they write reflections based on their experience. The instructors reflect the racial diversity of our students, and our students meet scientists who share about their work and obstacles they've overcome. Collectively, these experiences inspire our students to see themselves as future scientists.

In 2021, we started the In-School Program in a virtual format while students were still learning at home. When the schools fully opened in the fall, we resumed in-person programming where students began building their science identities in their classrooms, explored coastal habitats throughout San Diego, and practiced ways to make a difference at the Living Lab. The return to in-person learning was so inspiring, especially when our 2nd graders - who were learning at home for the past two years - got to go on their first field trip ever with Ocean Discovery!



"My kindergarten students' experience sparked a joy in within them to learn about the ocean and how to protect the life it supports."

**- MS. MILLER,
HAMILTON ELEMENTARY**

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

MS. MILLER

When we moved into the Living Lab back in 2018, we looked forward to scaling our In-School Program to reach kindergarten students. We relied on the guidance and feedback from teachers like Ms. Miller to develop an engaging curriculum for these young learners. And for the first time, we had kindergarten students exploring Manzanita Canyon and making a difference in their community.

When the global pandemic shifted our programs from virtual and then back to in-person, Ms. Miller kept her class of young scientists engaged. She helped our instructors navigate how to keep young learners excited and connected. In 2021, we reached more than 800 students in live virtual field trips! As we continue to reach kindergarten students in even more robust ways, we are working with Ms. Miller to develop a book program to increase literacy and resources for these young learners at home.

"There is something special you guys do that is eye-opening for the students. During the summer I applied to five different summer programs and out of all of them the one that impacted my kid the most was with you guys. He experiences anxiety and whenever he is having a rough day he lays in his bed and pulls his reflection book to read it and in minutes he calms down. We also have the certificate framed on his room wall and I find him looking at it with peace. We cannot wait for camp again!"

- PARENT



OUR PROGRAMS

OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Out-of-School Program reaches hundreds of kindergarten-8th grade students each year through week-long science camps after school and during the summer. During camp, students do hands-on science lessons, experience mentoring with diverse science leaders, practice written self-reflection, and build community among their peers. Collectively, these experiences inspire our students to believe that they can do science, achieve academically, and make a difference in their community.

In 2021, the pandemic continued to push us to get creative and find ways to reach students who needed the Out-of-School Program most. As summer approached, we knew we needed to do more. So, we used every inch of outdoor space at the Living Lab and engaged more than 450 students —four times more students than ever before! In addition, through a new “reflection” program component, our students found their powerful voices. Working alongside our Writer-In-Residence, author Amy Wallen, students built a culture and practice of written self-reflection. As a result, students discovered personal stories of compassion, humanity, empathy, and how they will make a difference in our world.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

JUAN

As we know, the pandemic created a major opportunity gap that left many students from communities like City Heights falling behind in school and struggling to cope. In 2021, our goal was to provide both academic enrichment and the social and emotional learning critical to a young person's development. Juan's story is a great example of this.

Juan and his family have been involved in Ocean Discovery for some time. The transition to virtual learning in 2020 took a toll on Juan. He missed learning with friends, seeing his teacher every day, and soon his schoolwork began to suffer.

In 2021, Juan was so thrilled to participate in Out-of-School Programs. During his week of camp, Juan came alive. Juan had a blast interacting with his peers, doing hands-on science, and finding inspiration working with role models and mentors. Juan says that the mentors he has met help him believe that he can do his best in school. Today, he regularly attends tutoring, completes his homework on time, and has rediscovered the motivation to keep learning.



"As a scientist, I am not so smart, but all of you guys make me think that I can do things that I think are impossible. I thought I couldn't ride a bike without training wheels, but Ocean Discovery told me to never give up. I fell sometimes, but I can ride my bike without training wheels now."

- JUAN



“Having a coach listen to me every week made me realize that I matter.”

- 10TH GRADE OCEAN LEADER

OUR PROGRAMS

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Our Leadership Program reaches high school and college students who are serious about pursuing a future in science. These intensive programs pair rigorous science experiences with college and career mentoring for students, or Ocean Leaders as we call them, each year. Collectively, these experiences shape our Ocean Leaders’ lives and identities as future science leaders.

In 2021, we launched a new component of our Leadership Program, called “Coaching and Community Building.” We did this to stay connected with our students and understand their evolving need throughout the school year. Our students build community by connecting with alumni, hearing from guest speakers, and openly discussing the academic challenges of returning to in-person school. Our coaching component provides students with a trained coach to identify personal and educational goals, and discuss challenges and opportunities to achieve their goals.



“Professionally, I am interested in pursuing a position in academia where I can bridge connections for underrepresented groups, like myself, in science.”

**- SUSAN, OCEAN DISCOVERY
ALUMNI ADVISORY COUNCIL**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

SUSAN

Susan is a senior at Brandeis University, graduating in 2022 with a B.S. in Biology and Chemical Biology. In 2021, Susan was a mentor and National Science Foundation Summer Undergraduate Research Assistant at Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

What inspired You to Pursue Science?

As a sophomore in high school, I applied for Ocean Discovery’s summer research experience in Baja California, MX. That summer, I conducted photobiology experiments on sea slugs. I started to believe in myself and my potential, which began my pursuit of a career in science. This past summer, I investigated marine phytoplankton and measured hydrogen peroxide levels in seawater samples. These research experiences inspire me to keep going and I want my journey to show students what’s possible!

What do you most look forward to in the future?

I’m in the process of applying to a Ph.D. program in Chemical Oceanography. I have a passion for microbial communities in the ocean and a curiosity to learn more about them and how they impact our ecosystem. I believe my research can address our climate issues and help those who think science is not a field they can pursue.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

This year, we had a total of 216 volunteers including 16 alumni and 189 science leaders. The majority of these volunteers reflected our students' racial and ethnic diversity and collectively, volunteers provided 5,775 hours of service.

In 2021, we expanded our virtual volunteer opportunities to ensure that every student had the chance to interview a science leader. For many it was their first time meeting someone who works in a science or a related field. We also launched a new Science Mentor volunteer opportunity, where science leaders joined our Leadership Program and worked with students embarking on their high school journey with Ocean Discovery.



"The site itself is inspired and energized by the way it's constructed – on my first day volunteering I gave a fish a high five at the entrance, hugged a tree in the back yard, watched the waves lap on a bunch of screens in a nook and saw a life sized drawing of a whale in the parking lot – it was big!"

- MATHEW, OCEAN DISCOVERY
SCIENCE ADVISORY COUNCIL



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

MATHEW

Mathew is the Senior Director of Corporate Development at Cidara Therapeutics. Mathew is driven to reduce suffering and promote healing through creative healthcare partnerships and attention to culture. He is passionate about people and making a positive impact on this world. In 2021, he generously volunteered his time in our virtual science volunteer program as well as participated in our first cohort of in-person Science Mentors for our Leadership Programs.

Mathew quickly became a dedicated volunteer, participating as often as possible. He believes in the mission of the organization and has built an important connection to the students in our programs. As a mentor in the Leadership Programs, Mathew worked alongside our students as they discovered the world of marine protected areas. It was a natural fit to volunteer with Ocean Discovery as so much of Mathew's science journey happened in the tide pools along the central coast of California.

He is excited to continue working with the students of Ocean Discovery as they continue their journey to becoming the next generation of science leaders.



Photo Credit: U.S. Department of the Interior

“As we work to address inequitable access to the outdoors for communities of color and underserved communities, places like the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge serve as a model of what it looks like to create inclusive spaces that all people, regardless of their background, can access.”

**- U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
DEB HAALAND**

OUR SUPPORTERS

Ocean Discovery Institute is committed to reaching young people traditionally excluded from science due to race, income status, and educational opportunity. With the generous and steadfast support of a community of individuals and government, foundation and corporate partners, we are proud to provide 100% tuition-free programs.

In 2021, our supporters ensured Ocean Discovery Institute could continue to meet the evolving needs of the community. We are grateful for your unparalleled generosity.

During the 2021 calendar year

- The U.S. Secretary of the Interior visited our students in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. She spoke to them about how they can make a difference in protecting our natural spaces.
- Our partners at Feeding San Diego gave more than \$225,000 in food donations allowing us to distribute 47,171 meals.
- Arlene Harris, the first female inductee into the Wireless Hall of Fame, and Martin Cooper, the inventor of the cell phone, visited the Living Lab, inspiring our students to make their own innovations one day.



OUR SUPPORTERS

LEGACY CIRCLE

(Endowment Contributions)

Fisler Family for tomorrow's science leaders

Shara Fisler & Family

Bob Meinzer & Steve McIntee in honor of their parents
Eileen & Frank McIntee and Marie & Bob Meinzer

IMPACT CIRCLE

(\$250,000+)

CA Department of Parks & Recreation

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
Office of Education

San Diego Unified School District

Satterberg Foundation

The Builders Initiative

INNOVATION CIRCLE

(\$100,000 - \$249,999)

Aqualia International Foundation, Ltd.

Bank of America Charitable Foundation

J.W. Sefton Foundation

New York Life Foundation

Price Philanthropies

The San Diego Foundation



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 Theresa Talley
 Sagar Vaidya
 John Wang
 Tanzania Ware



“I’ve had the pleasure of getting to see the philanthropic impact that the bank is making here. I just can’t imagine a better career for a kid who grew up swimming, surfing and lifeguarding here and who continues to be completely in love with our city. I’ve been part of this community as it grew from a smaller, military, beach town into one of the largest and most diverse cities in the United States, with a significant science and technology presence.”

RICK BREGMAN
PRESIDENT, BANK OF AMERICA SAN DIEGO

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

BANK OF AMERICA

Rick Bregman is a native San Diegan and started with Bank of America over 30 years ago. Rick focused on building relationships with San Diego businesses, the past 14 years as the bank president for San Diego.

What inspired Bank of America to select Ocean Discovery as a Neighborhood Builder?

This is about inspiring and investing in the next generation of young science leaders through hands-on learning experiences. Given the bank’s focus on investing in education and job skill-building for youth and teens, we chose Ocean Discovery for their incredible work empowering high school students from City Heights. These kids are interested in pursuing college and science careers. This is so important in a city where science careers are plentiful. We are providing capital that will enable Ocean Discovery to double the number of high school kids they serve and help more people succeed.

Why is giving back important to you and to Bank of America?

Bank of America has been in San Diego for 100 years, so we are an important part of this community, its history, and our future. We recognize our responsibility to help create economic opportunity for the next generation. This means partnering with local organizations to help people not only obtain access to education and job skills but hunger relief, stable homes and financial security. Nationally, Bank of America has committed \$1.25 billion over five years to advance racial equality and economic opportunity, and our investments into San Diego businesses, households, and not-for-profits helps address critical issues and long-term gaps. This means greater opportunities and a better future for more San Diegans.

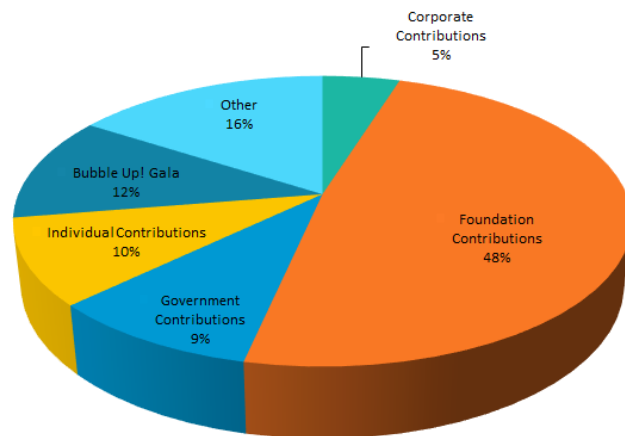
FY 2021 FINANCIALS

By developing a highly diversified donor base, made up of national and local foundations, government agencies, corporations, and deeply committed individual donors, Ocean Discovery Institute is able to ensure the continued sustainability and future expansion of programming.

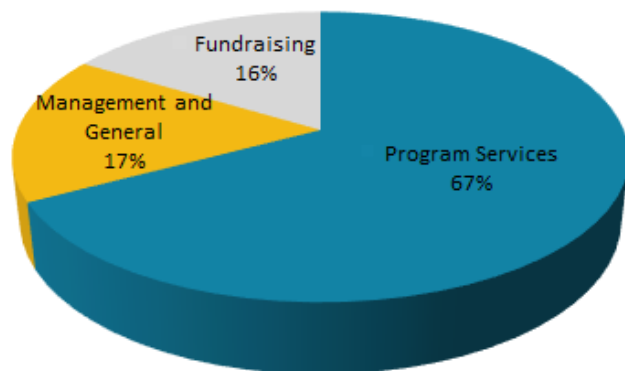
FINANCIAL STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

	FY 2021
Revenues, Gains, and Other Support	
Corporate Contributions	\$ 156,930
Foundation Contributions	\$ 1,576,565
Government Contributions	\$ 306,438
Individual Contributions	\$ 310,668
<i>Bubble Up! Gala</i>	\$ 378,847
Other	\$ 516,642
Total Revenues, Gains, and Other Support	\$ 3,246,000
Expenses	
Program Services	\$ 1,557,825
Management and General	\$ 381,669
Fundraising	\$ 379,364
Total Expenses	\$ 2,318,858
Change in Net Assets	\$ 972,232
Net Assets at beginning of year	\$ 7,223,042
Net Assets at end of year	\$ 8,150,274

REVENUE CATEGORIES



EXPENSE CATEGORIES





**OCEAN
DISCOVERY
INSTITUTE**

*young lives transformed
through science*



GIVE. LEARN. VOLUNTEER.

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