

Discovery Center of Idaho Receives \$450K Grant For Capital Campaign

The grant will support an expanded state-of-the-art center, increasing educational STEM programming and opportunities in the Treasure Valley.

BOISE, ID- October 30th, 2024 -- The Discovery Center of Idaho announces it has been awarded a \$450,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust of Vancouver, Washington. This grant supports the Discovery Center of Idaho's Capital Campaign, which seeks to renovate the center, providing expanded gallery spaces, increased accessibility, and broadened educational outreach programming for students, educators and the general public. When complete, the Discovery Center will be able to host over 100,000 visitors each year, in contrast to its current capacity of 85,000 visitors.

"We are incredibly grateful to the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust for the generous support of our Capital Campaign," said Kate Cwikiel, Development Director at the Discovery Center of Idaho. "These funds will enable us to expand on our mission of inspiring lifelong curiosity and help us create innovative and inclusive spaces for all community members to explore the wonders of STEM learning. Together we are building a center that will serve as a cornerstone for our community."

As Idaho's only hands-on science center, the Discovery Center has paved the way for interactive STEM and arts learning and education in Idaho. The center has served as a critical resource for Idaho's students, families, teachers and employers, with over 10,000 students visiting the center each year for field trips and educational programming.

In recent years, the Discovery Center's building has limited its ability to continue serving the community. The Treasure Valley's explosive growth, coupled with increasing demands for STEM-focused education, has outpaced the center's capacity. The building, originally used as a naval recruitment center, was already 40 years old when it was converted to a science center in 1988. Today, the building reflects its age, showing dire need of renovation. The proposed \$6.4M Capital Campaign project will support comprehensive interior and exterior renovations, ensuring the Discovery Center can meet the needs of the Treasure Valley and inspire future scientists and innovators for the next 35 years.

"The Discovery Center is incredibly fortunate to be situated in such an ideal location. While the City of Boise offers us this wonderful opportunity, we have not fully utilized the building and surrounding grounds. The Murdock Trust grant will enable us to update our infrastructure and enhance our indoor and outdoor spaces, allowing us to better serve our growing and evolving community for generations to come." said Eric Miller, Executive Director at the Discovery Center of Idaho.

Major areas of focus for the project include modernizing and extending the usable life of the building, creating a world-class facility that encourages active public engagement with STEM learning. Increasing the gallery spaces will improve the accessibility, efficiency and sustainability of the building, allowing the center to hold more people safely and meet the increasing demand for camps and classes. New climate control systems will enable the center to host exhibitions it previously could not accommodate, and

multilingual interpretive signage will make exhibitions more accessible to non-English speakers and sight-impaired visitors. Accessibility needs will be better accommodated with wheeled access to all areas, improved lighting, and acoustic treatments.

The Discovery Center's Capital Campaign project started in 2022, with some renovations to the interior already in place. With plans of completion in 2026, the project has been phased to continue with exterior renovations before finalizing the interior, in order to minimize public closures of the center.

"The Discovery Center is creating vital space for youth in Boise to learn, explore, and be curious," said Elaine Charpentier Philippi, Senior Program Officer for Nonprofit Leadership & Development at the Murdock Trust. "The Murdock Trust is honored to support the Center's Capital Campaign and its impressive work making its programs increasingly accessible, inclusive, and engaging for learners of all ages."

Despite being awarded the grant, the Discovery Center's Capital Campaign fundraising goal of \$6.4 million is still far from complete. The campaign has raised and identified \$4.8M, with \$1.6M remaining, sparking a public fundraising effort to reach this goal. Without community support, the new Discovery Center of Idaho is out of reach, rendering it impossible to keep up with the demands of the growing population in the Treasure Valley. To learn more about the capital campaign and donate today, visit the [Discovery Center of Idaho's website](#).

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About the Discovery Center of Idaho

The Discovery Center of Idaho is a private non-profit 501(C)3 organization, whose mission is to inspire lifelong interest and learning in science, technology, engineering, math (STEM) and the arts. Founded in 1988 by the Junior League of Boise, the Discovery Center is Idaho's only hands-on science center, providing new opportunities for the local community to interact with STEM, alongside creating a more scientifically literate, curious and empowered future generation. Visit dcidaho.org for more information.

About the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust

M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, created by the will of the late Melvin J. (Jack) Murdock, provides grants to organizations in five states of the Pacific Northwest—Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington—that seek to strengthen the region's educational and cultural base in creative and sustainable ways. Learn more at www.murdocktrust.org.