



# Annual Impact Report

2020





**"PLAYTIME  
IS THE ROCKET  
FUEL OF  
DEVELOPMENT"**

## **Our Mission**

Spark's Mission is to enrich the lives of young learners by creating shared, interactive experiences that engage people of all ages in the joy of play, the power of learning, and a sense of community.

**CU  
RIO  
SITY**

# Letter from our Executive Director

2020 has been anything but business as usual. Despite these challenges Spark has emerged triumphant, opening the doors of a fresh new facility, and have matured into an independent and impactful family service organization.

This success is a direct testament to our stakeholders who strongly believe that play is the work of our children. Despite the obstacles, we were able to realize our dream of creating a brand-new, highly accessible resource featuring innovative exhibits, a state-of-the-art maker space, classroom, climber with much more coming in 2021. We are extremely proud of the new space and all cleaning protocols we have put into place to provide a safe place for everyone to play!

We are thankful to the Minnesota Children's Museum for their guidance and for giving us the wings to do this important work on our own, intentionally tailoring the facility to meet the needs of the Rochester community and the surrounding region for years to come. Programming, communications, fundraising, and operations are also revitalized, and we look forward to a busier than ever 2021 in this beautiful space, intentionally designed to ignite curiosity, celebrate diversity, and cultivate the most memorable family experiences possible.

-Jennifer Staley,  
Executive Director

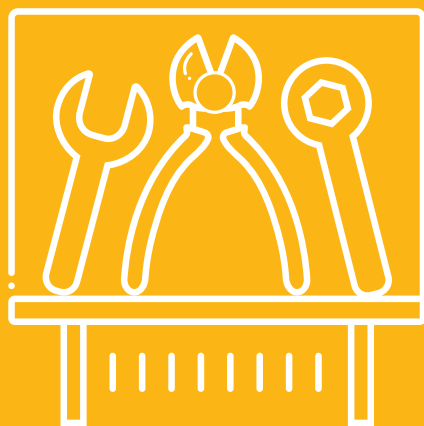


**NEW.  
BIGGER.  
BETTER.**



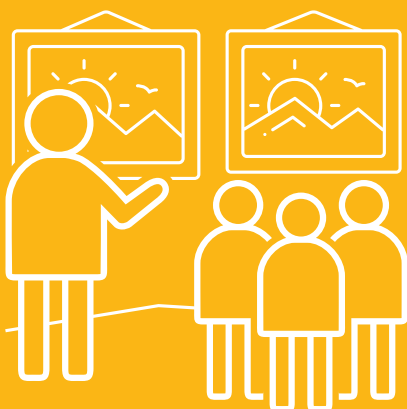
## **IMAGINATION STATION, MAKERS SPACE, PRIVATE PARTY ROOM**

Each day new crafts, projects and hands-on creativity is encouraged in this imaginative space. The makerspace is a place where individuals and groups can create and learn in a safe hands-on environment.



## **HANDS-ON EXHIBITS**

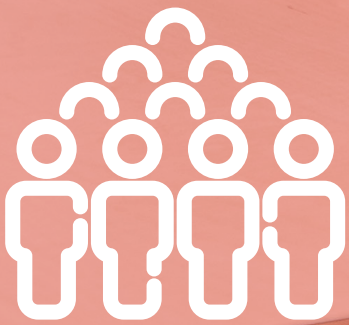
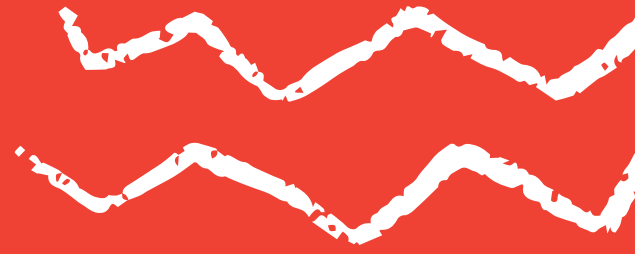
*Our World Bazaar* features a stage area with costumes, tailor, market, kitchen and restaurant and library seating area all highlighting more than 53 different cultures. *H2OH* what a blast the kids have in this area learning about the power of water. The *Little Sparks* area provides a safe play area for the littlest sparks with soft places to crawl, mirror triangle and a light table to discover. The green screen creates backgrounds and unique videos or try your hand at being a reporter. Our *Helix* is a safe, artistic crawl space for kids of all ages to climb and explore. Stay tuned as plans are now underway for our *Smarter Cities* Exhibit opening in late 2021.



## **INCLUSIVITY & PARTNERSHIPS**

Spark partners with organizations to ensure access to children in area Community Schools and through local programs. Sensory accommodation bags are also available for use for children with special needs.

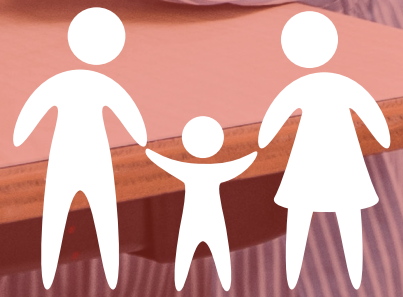
# SPARK CONNECTED



**13,000 people  
served**



**Over 19  
countries**



**1,200  
members**

# COMMUNITY FOCUSED

## Discovery Play

Thanks to the generosity of the Rochester Area Foundation, we are excited to welcome Discovery Play to Spark! Spark welcomes children and families of all abilities, on our Discovery Play night families and children impacted by a special need can explore Spark on their own terms while caregivers have the opportunity to connect with other families in the community. Music sessions with a licensed music therapist, storytelling, and specialized programming will be offered. Information from local supportive organizations will be available.

## Free Sundays

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, across a child's lifetime, children in poverty experience a 6,000-hour learning difference compared to children who have economic stability. It is said that the early years of childhood are pivotal for later success and recognition of foundational skills, especially those children who fall below the poverty threshold. Thanks to Minnwest Bank, Spark is accessible to all families once a month, regardless of financial barriers!



## Learning through the ages

Establishing intergenerational relationships allows both groups to learn about each other's differences and similarities while building relational capacity and a sense of fulfillment. Thanks to Benedictine Living Community-Rochester, grandparents can play FREE at Spark every Tuesday for the entire year!





**5,000  
GOOGLY EYES**

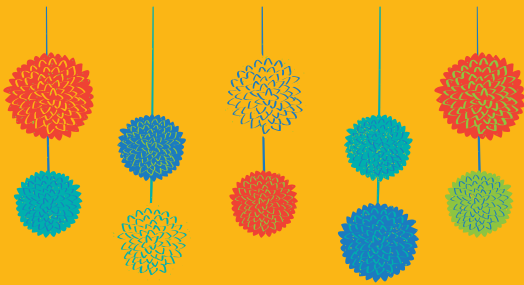
**800 CRAYONS**



**10 GALLONS OF GLUE**



**10,000  
POM POM BALLS**



"We had a blast at Spark today. There were so many things for my kids to do. We spent 4 hours there and they were still playing hard. The staff was great and very friendly. Thanks for making this a great experience. I would recommend checking this place out if you have young children."

-Patrick E.

**WE MADE  
LOTS OF  
CRAFTS!**



# SPARK PARTNERED

"I couldn't say enough good things about Spark! Their new space inside Apache Mall is absolutely beautiful. It is vibrant in color from floor to ceiling, very clean, and is welcoming the second you walk through their doors."

-Audrey H.



MORE THAN 100 PROGRAMS  
AND EVENTS WITH OVER 50  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS!

# OUR GENEROUS DONORS

## \$500,000 and Above

Harper Family Foundation

## \$100,000 - \$499,999

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund

Brookfield Properties

Bowman Tool & Machining

Mayo Clinic

Rochester Athletic Club

Think Mutual Bank

## \$50,000 - \$99,999

Bradley and Rebecca Nuss

LJ and Judy Johnson

Mardag Foundation

Mark and Mary Ellen Warner

Minnesota Department  
of Education

Otto Bremer Trust

The Hubbard Broadcasting  
Foundation/ABC 6 News

## \$25,000 - \$49,999

Altra Federal Credit Union

Foresight Bank

Kwik Trip

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Benike Construction

Custom Alarm

HGA

Loree and Randy Flick

Minnwest Bank

Premier Bank

United Way of Olmsted County

## \$1,000 - \$9,999

Allan and Ann DeBoer

Alliance Property

## \$1,000 - \$9,999

Associated Bank

Chris and Rebecca Wendland

Christopher and Jill Rock

City of Rochester

Dave and Beth Sherden

Debby and Buzz Miller

Designer Specialty  
Products, LLC

Dr. Michael and Marliee Wood

Fast Signs

First Impression Group

G-Matic Systems Inc

Hybrid Mechanical LLC

James F. and Judy Sloan

James Johnson

Jennifer and Michael Hosfeld

John Wade

Karel Weigel

Kari and Grant Michaletz

Kenneth Brown

Madonna Living Community

Mark Steege

Martha Meyers

Mavis Bowman

Melissa Brinkman

Merchants Bank

Midwest Floor Solutions

Nickelson Painting

North Sky Health Consulting

Olmsted Medical Center

Palmer Soderberg

Pearson & Stemper Electric

Primrose School of Rochester

R&M Development Company

Randy Beissel

Rochester Area Foundation

Rochester Moms Blog

Ryan Companies

Scheels

Sean and Angie Malloy

Sean Ryan

Sharon and Al Tuntland

Shelley Henry

Susan and David Ahlquist

Teri and Pat Deutsch

## \$1,000 - \$9,999

Tessa's Office: Wine & Spirits

Thomas and Kula Shives

Tim and Kayla Deutsch

Tom Kadlec Honda

WA Group

Walmart Stores

Wendland Utz, Ltd

## \$250 - \$999

Al and MaryAnn Moschner

Amy Baskin

Audrey V. Hunt

Brooke Carlson

Budget Blinds

Casey's General Store

Chris Walls

Darcy and Leanne Elmer

David and Jane Piepgras

Elaine Case

Fagan Studios

Ginger R Carson

Greystone Foundation

Hal and Holly Henderson

Hometown Haulers LLC

Jaclyn Houghton

James and Judy Seward

Jennifer Staley

Lisette M. Hauger

Macken Funeral Home

Mark R. Bahn

North Rock Real Estate

Pace International

Peggy Menzel

Rebecca Montpetit

Rochester Catholic Schools

Rochester Golf and  
Country Club

Saint Mary's University of  
Minnesota

Sound & Media Solutions

Sterling State Bank

Terry and Mary Maus

West Bank

Willow Creek Golf Course