

V I S T A S



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From the desk of V. Marie Martin
Foundation Director

Outreach is key to the mission of Flint Hills Discovery Center, and the Flint Hills Discovery Center Foundation exists to provide financial support for outreach activities. These activities include exploration of Flint Hills' history, culture, geology, ecology, engineering, ranching and more.

Going beyond the walls of the Flint Hills Discovery Center building in Manhattan, Kan., the dedicated education team at FHDC has delivered more than five years of offsite educational programs and outreach. Over 3,655 children and adults have participated in the opportunities listed below. A few, but not all, of the education team's outreach opportunities include:



During 2014-2015, the FHDC education team delivered the "Share the Story" program to preschoolers in **22 counties of the Flint Hills region** at no cost to the schools. Since it was difficult for young children to travel significant distances to visit the Flint Hills Discovery Center, a program was delivered onsite at daycares, pre-schools and kindergarten classrooms. This program was funded by grants secured by the Flint Hills Discovery Center Foundation, and was our gift to the future generation of Flint Hills' stewards. The program was delivered to over 1,490 preschoolers and 217 adults, at 46 different locations in 28 towns. The FHDC education team travelled over 3,907 miles to deliver these programs.

The FHDC education team has also gone on the road to participate in off-site events such as the Axtell Harvest Festival in **Axtell, KS** – 2016 and 2017; Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve's 20th Anniversary, **Strong City, KS** - 2016; and Washunga Days in **Council Grove, KS** – 2015.

At events such as those above, tallgrass prairie displays are available to see and touch. A popular display has pelts from various tallgrass prairie animals such as bison, coyote, fox, beaver, skunk and raccoon. Bison bones, included in many displays, are among audience favorites.

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Closer to home the E.A.R.T.H. Workshop, sponsored by the Riley County Extension Office, is an annual event—open all 5th graders in Riley County—held at CiCo Park in Manhattan. FHDC education staff attend the two-day event and offer environmental education activities about the tallgrass prairie.



The FHDC education team works annually with Kansas ECO Meet at the **Milford EcoMeet which is held at the Milford Lake Nature Center**. This science competition, with a goal to create greater regional environmental awareness, is for middle and high school students. In 2017, knowledge of the tallgrass prairie was an important component of the competition. A FHDC education team member served as volunteer interpretive judge for student presentations.

Splash of Science was a new, free summer program. At noon on Fridays, an educator offered a mini-demonstration about a science concept at the Blue Earth Plaza. Most popular was a demonstration about dry-ice bubbles in which the audience could learn about states of

matter and density.

Prairie Chicken Booming in the spring is very popular, and attracts not only Flint Hills' residents, but visitors from as far away as South Dakota and Illinois to participate in this prairie immersive experience. In 2015, 2016 and 2017, over 70 adults and children sat quietly in the cold and dark for hours in anticipation of the prairie chicken flying in to begin their dance!

FHDC and STEM. Through a grant funded partnership with the Manhattan-Ogden School District, FHDC offered eight **STEM (science, technology, engineering and math)** school programs at no cost to local elementary schools in summer 2017. The FHDC education team is able to develop very creative topics every time these programs are presented.

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The FHDC education team has a great deal of experience in presenting offsite educational and outreach programs. Team members can travel to school and offsite locations and present existing programs or develop a presentation for specific curriculum needs or general interests. Each program has the potential to be unique based on the collection of activities selected by the particular group.

Read VISTAS Memo, now online at the FHDC website, <http://www.flinthillsdiscovery.org/414/Vistas-Memo>. The Foundation's pages are located within the FHDC website, so be sure and take time to browse other sections of the FHDC website to keep up with all the activities happening at the Foundation and the Discovery Center.

The Flint Hills Discovery Center Foundation

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The VISTAS MEMO is provided to advance the cause of philanthropy in support of the Flint Hills Discovery Center. We thank and celebrate all those investing in the Center's unique and dynamic mission.