

a year of engagement

2021 minnetrișta

museum & gardens ——— awwal report

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Have you ever wondered how we decide on what programs and experiences we offer? In addition to being driven by our mission, vision, and values—the team at Minnetrista Museum & Gardens has developed a Philosophy of Visitor Engagement. The principles defined in this document provide the framework for all of our programming.

In 2021, as we were able to bring more in-person experiences back on line, our staff teams relied on this framework even while still having to tweak some programs and consider capacity limits in an environment that was not yet free of a world pandemic. Board and staff continue to monitor local, national, and international conditions and follow CDC guidelines for our county. All decisions are always aligned by our quiding documents: our Mission, our Vision, our Values, and our Philosophy of Visitor Engagement.

We are excited to share with you just a few of the stories that emerged in 2021 that are impactful examples of the five principles of that Philosophy. As always, your participation, your gifts, and your partnerships form the basis of all of these stories. As we continue to stretch ourselves and draw new audiences from around the country to our community, we hope that you continue to lift up Minnetrista with your support and engagement. You are our key to success!

"They" say that you should always do at least one thing every day that makes you happy. We hope that many times, that includes having you and your families here.

Be happy,

President & CFO

Betty Brewer

President & CFO

Steven M. Smith

Steve Smith

Chair, Board of Trustees

Chair, Board of Trustees

our philosophy — of visitor engagement

Minnetrista Museum & Gardens has a philosophy of visitor engagement which guides our programmatic planning, helping to align decision making by teams across the organization. This 2021 annual report is organized around our philosophy, comprised of the following five principles:

We believe in the power of participation.

Minnetrista programming will include multiple methods of engagement for learners of all types and ages.

We believe in the power of the Visitor's Voice.

Minnetrista programming will strive to be a dialogue between audience and institution, creating moments of shared authority on a subject.

We believe in the power of plaw.

Minnetrista programming will be centered in appropriate learner environments, with a focus on intentionally developing experiences that are unique to our site and heritage.

We believe in the power of the authentia.

Minnetrista programming will utilize quality resources and personnel including accurate information, current best practices, and access to the real thing when possible.

We believe in the power of personal councilors. Minnetrista programming will strive for relevancy by making connections between visitors' lives and experiences and the objects, ideas, and experiences of others.

2021 highlights



FEBRUARY

CBS Sunday Morning airs a segment featuring the *Bob Ross Experience*



APRIL

Arbor Day giveaway distributes311 free saplings to the community



JUNE

Minnetrista celebrates Karen Vincent's retirement after 32 years of service



SEPTEMBER

Flags of Honor returns to the Minnetrista campus



OCTOBER

Bob Ross Experience expansion opens featuring a **new painting workshop** and **art gallery**



NOVEMBER

Minnetrista is honored as Arts Leader at the 2021 Mayor's Arts Award



DECEMBER

Enchanted Luminaria Walk returns to campus, welcoming **6,307** holiday revelers

the power of partion

Engagement at Every Turn

One of the core beliefs of our philosophy of visitor engagement honors the power of visitor participation. We believe that having visitors engage with what they're doing on site leads to stronger relationships and deeper memories.

This engagement happens at an individual level and through strong relationships with the community around us and other local organizations. For Family Adventure Days, we bring in local organizations and businesses. Past partners include Toys Forever, Mounds State Park, and Orchestra Indiana, to name a few. In 2021, partner organizations and staff created engaging activities they shared with 519 attendees at our two free Family Adventure Day events.

Also in 2021, Minnetrista celebrated National Public Gardens Week, Pollinator Week, and Nature Play Days. These are nationwide, week-long events with different activities each day coordinated by our Visitor Experience and Horticulture teams. These activities consistently keep in mind the idea of working together in nature and were available free-of-charge to visitors.

Through the Popup Gardens program we bring gardening to the community by delivering premade gardens to families and community partners. In 2021 we delivered 90 gardens, with all plants grown from seeds by the Minnetrista Horticulture team and planted and distributed by volunteers. In addition to providing dozens of families with gardens, we also worked with partners like Motivate our Minds, the Children's Bureau, and Ross Community Center who focus on food insecurity or early childhood development. Each garden provides community members with fresh produce, while providing a hands-on opportunity to learn more about gardening.



membership — program sours

Minnetrista's programs engage visitors and encourage participatory learning, and a Minnetrista membership offers affordable access to it all! It's no wonder that Minnetrista's membership program rose to new heights in 2021. We ended the year with 830 members, including the addition of 256 brand new memberships. This marks the highest number of memberships in ten years! We were excited to see new members join from all over the country. In fact, 19% of our new members were from outside our 7-county home service area. Many of our new members joined when they came to visit the *Bob Ross Experience*.

Affordable access to Minnetrista continues to be important to us. Our Museums for All membership is only \$5 and offers the same access to our exhibits and programs as the Local Family Access membership. In January 2021, we eliminated the income threshold requirement allowing even more families to join. We partnered with organizations across our region to advertise this initiative, and as a result, we saw 36 new families join last year. By the end of 2021, we had grown the program ten-fold! We look forward to actively growing memberships as more neighbors seek ways to engage at Minnetrista.

membership by the numbers

	2019	2020	2021
Membership Count	743	532	830
Museums for All	8	4	42



the power of the visitor's voice

Curating The Orchard Shop

Since it opened to the public, The Orchard Shop at Minnetrista has seen many changes driven by the voices of our community. Under the guidance of a new retail manager in 2021, the Shop continued to evolve, adjusting its product offerings to better reflect the uniqueness of Minnetrista and to better meet the demands of our customers

In 2021, The Orchard Shop expanded engagement with our community and visitors by growing consignment relationships with local artists (both existing and new), through product collaborations with local businesses, and by introducing in-store offerings exclusively for members. After much collaboration, tasting, tweaking, and more tasting, our partnership with local Muncie business, The Caffeinery, came to fruition in November when we introduced the Oakhurst and Oakhurst Dark Woods coffee blends – exclusively available at The

Orchard Shop. 2021 also saw the creation of monthly Member Saturdays at the Shop, with new products and special promotions exclusively for Minnetrista members. And following a wave of visitor demand, Minnetrista expanded our inventory of exclusive *Bob Ross Experience* items in 2021, introducing youth t-shirts, baby items, coffee mugs, and more.

Evolving to meet visitor desires is an approach that quickly proved itself successful, as 2021 was our most profitable year in the Shop to date! With customers returning to the store on a regular basis for more Oakhurst coffee beans and members marking their calendars for each Member Saturday, we are building a strong repeat customer base. With an eye on our evolving programmatic offerings and an ear tuned to our visitors' needs, we will continue to ensure a one-of-a-kind shopping experience at The Orchard Shop.







our book collection grows—with your recommendations

What is your most inspiring book? This question was at the heart of George Ball's venture into book collecting. It was the question that led him, and eventually his daughter Betty, to fill their home library with over 10,000 books – the largest and finest collection of children's literature in the world at the time!

Today, this history of literacy is part of what is celebrated at the *Oakhurst Experience*, located in the former home of George, Frances, and Betty Ball. Every visitor to the *Oakhurst Experience* is invited to answer this question for themselves on one of our custom bookmarks, and in doing so, they become a collaborator in our library! Any bookmarks that list titles already in our collection are nestled into their corresponding books, often joining the bookmarks of fellow readers. When a bookmark suggests a title we don't already have, that book is purchased and added to our shelves. As visitors peruse the shelves, they not only find these inspirational books, but also each contributor's bookmark, containing the story of why the book so inspires them.

In 2021, we were delighted to nearly double our selection of community-sourced books through visitors' recommendations! So tell us: what is your most inspiring book? This question remains the beating heart of the Oakhurst library, just as it was all those years ago, but your responses help us curate something truly unique — a living collection that we create together as a community.



a creative community's colorful wear wes

In 2021, Minnetrista's visitors flexed their imaginations and artistic creativity, responding in droves to a "monstrous" challenge.

During the run of the *Giants, Dragons, and Unicorns* exhibit, the second floor of the Center Building transformed into a creature "corral" filled with stories of monsters from around the world. Minnetrista also added in Hoosier legends about local fairies, UFOs, and even werewolves.

By examining the evidence, guests became detectives, separating the truths from the myths and joining the conversation themselves! An activity cart prompt encouraged visitors to contribute their own monster stories and drawings to the exhibition. The result: hundreds of colorful creations, exhibited in the Atrium throughout the spring.

Some guests found inspiration in the gallery itself, drawing krakens, mermaids, and dragons. Others imagined all new creatures. For example, the "mermicorn," a half mermaid half unicorn, and "Skinny Bones," a pizza loving alien! It was common for artists to sign their pictures with their names and ages, creating an unexpectedly touching archive of the creative Minnetrista community we strive to serve every day. Last year was a wonderful "Monster Mash" at Minnetrista!

We need You

Without your support in 2021, exhibits like Giants, Dragons, and Unicorns would not have been possible!



the power of place

What is a "Minnetrista?"

From the Sioux word "mna" meaning water and the old English word "tryst" meaning a gathering or meeting, the word Minnetrista loosely translates to a gathering place by the water. And although that unique name has deep ties to this site and its history, Minnetrista staff frequently engage with people who want to know what exactly Minnetrista is. These inquiries have increased as the Bob Ross Experience has boosted our visibility beyond East Central Indiana

After several months of thoughtful discussion with our staff and Trustees, we concluded that an update to our name might help solve some of

the mystery, thus Minnetrista Museum & Gardens was born! We introduced this new name and our updated logo to the public at the end of 2021.

This recent evolution of our name was envisioned to better communicate what a new guest will find when they visit, while still emphasizing the name so familiar to our local community and so tied to the site and its history. It also emphasizes our recommitment to providing more of what our local community has come to expect from Minnetrista: world-class exhibitions, engaging learning experiences, and beautiful gardens and nature areas for recreation and respite.

Old Logo



New Logo



pop the lid off your history

"What's your story? Your memories, your everyday experiences — that's history!" Visitors read this at the entrance to Minnetrista's original exhibition, *Jarring Our Memories*, on view from May 8 to August 1, 2021.

The exhibit told the Ball Brothers story in a new way, through the voices of the glass company workers. In 2018, Minnetrista began recording oral histories with Ball employees. From hours of audio emerged stories about life on the factory line, workplace friendships and tensions, and a growing company. Available to the public for the first time, these voices shaped a different picture of Ball, one about the hardworking community

that worked alongside the "Brothers" here in Muncie. Jarring Our Memories also encouraged visitors to think of their own memories as history that is worthy of preservation, by encouraging guests to sit together and reminisce. A note left in the exhibit's memory book on the show's final day indicates that many took this opportunity to heart. Sheri and Nina wrote: "We both worked at Ball and became close friends. 20+ years later we came to visit and share our own memories of Ball Corp. and many good times."

With memories shared and new stories set to be recorded, our visitors made history in 2021!



the house where it happened

Paintbrushes held inches from the canvas, twelve students paused just before putting the first stroke onto their landscape. The moment was loaded with more than Alizarin Crimson—there was history soaked through it. Held in October 2021, this first class inside the newly renovated workshop space on the second floor of the L.L. Ball Home was special to each participant because this was where Bob himself had painted. Down the hall, in the renovated Gallery space, Bob's compositions from Season 2 of *The Joy of Painting* hung on the walls. Comprised of on-air creations and the meticulous images created for his reference books, this was the first time the works have been together back in the house since Bob painted them during his first year in Muncie, Indiana.

With the expansion of the *Bob Ross Experience* in 2021, we doubled-down on the idea that extraordinary places have a strong allure. By offering something that is unique to a specific location and can only be experienced by physically being there, we have harnessed the power of this specific place. This is an important part of what draws people from across the country to Minnetrista—to become immersed in the accomplishments of our community and become inspired to achieve their own.





Activating **MV* Storytelling Spaces

Between 2019 and 2021, we strategically increased the use of our storytelling spaces across campus, providing our community with more exhibitions and learning opportunities. Here's a look at the change over the past three years.

Percentage of Available Space Utilized for Exhibits & Storytelling

2019

48%

2020

60%

2021 **85%**

the power of the authentic

The Heritage Collection beyond Ball

Driven to share "the real thing" whenever possible, Minnetrista strives to utilize the power of the authentic as often as we can. Supporting this practice is the Minnetrista Heritage Collection — our rich museum collection documenting the Ball family, Ball company, our site, and the broader history of East Central Indiana. Comprised of artifacts as large as our historic structures, and as unassuming as a creased menu, the Heritage Collection provides ways to experience the real thing up close. From stepping into the actual kitchen where the *Ball Blue Book* was developed, to hearing community stories in the voices of those who lived the experiences, visitors at Minnetrista can find the real thing across our campus at almost every turn.

As part of the opening of phase two of the *Bob Ross Experience* in 2021, we responded to our visitors by giving them more of the authenticity that they are craving. The new second floor art gallery will regularly show off more of Bob Ross's canvases from our collection. This allows visitors an even deeper understanding of the history of our site, and more opportunity to take inspiration from our unique community stories.



mapping the authentic



Cider Press

Minnetrista is famous for our apple cider, fresh-pressed every autumn on our site.

Oakhurst Home

The home of George and Frances Ball has been meticulously maintained and features exhibits that allow visitors to explore the history and passions of that family.





Heritage Collection & Archive

The collection and archive document the significant cultural, industrial, and social history of our region.

Bob Ross's Easel

Complete with paint splatters and that spot where he would "beat the devil out of it," Bob's painting easel is on display, along with several of his brushes and other supplies, at the *Bob Ross Experience*.



Not, Just the Bob Ross Experience

In 2021, **85.7%** of *Bob Ross Experience* visitors also visited exhibits at **Oakhurst**, the **Center Building**, or **both**, to experience more authentic objects and engaging stories!

collecting history

Minnetrista had 49 accessions to the Heritage Collection in 2021, representing thousands of new, historically-significant items and images.

of personal connections

Fulfilling Research Requests

Personal connections are of utmost importance at Minnetrista. Across the museum campus we work to create meaningful learning experiences that inspire imaginative thought and encourage connections between visitors. Every year the Collections and Storytelling division provides assistance to numerous researchers, both in person and at a distance. These curious individuals come in many forms, but what they all have in common is the desire to utilize our museum collection, archives, and staff experts to advance their knowledge.

In 2021, fourth grader Reid K. of Vincennes, Indiana, reached out for assistance with a school research project he was working on about Bob Ross. Minnetrista's staff were thrilled to work with Reid, and the end product was a resounding success. After presenting his report to his class, Reid's mother reached out to let us know, "One of the highlights for Reid during this project was having contact with Minnetrista. Thanks again for everything!" Whether we are facilitating interactions between two visitors, or between a researcher and our staff, Minnetrista understands that personal connections are some of the most valuable experiences.

research requests by the **year**

	2019	2020	2021
Ball-Related	80	84	80
Bob Ross- Related	5	10	14
Other Topics	65	88	134





human library events

After taking a bit of time away from in-person sessions, Minnetrista was happy to welcome the Human Library Project back in 2021. Taking the lead from the original Human Library Project in Copenhagen to offer safer programming during the pandemic, we offered two programs outside that we called the Human Library Reading Garden.

The Human Library Project is a place where guests can come to "check out" a person who is a "book". Through conversation, each book shares about their subject in order to open lines of

communication and help visitors learn more about them and their story. Some book titles at events in 2021 included "Corrections Officer," "Transgender," "Adopted," and "Abuse Survivor."

These programs are a fantastic fit for Minnetrista as a way to make personal connections between visitors and people who they may otherwise not come in contact with. Making these connections helps build relationships and further understanding of our community.



a super-fan's **dream** come true

Personal connections at Minnetrista look very different from one instance to another. At times, those connections may take the form of a family creating memories together. On other days a visitor may make connections between their life experiences and those represented by an artifact. In the summer of 2021, Connor—a young Bob Ross fan from Madison, Wisconsin—reached out to Minnetrista's staff to let them know how excited he was to hear about our new Bob Ross exhibit. After a few months of correspondence, Connor and his dad Gary were able to schedule a trip to visit the Bob Ross Experience. On the day of their visit our Vice President of Collections

and Storytelling met with the duo. The three spent quality time together in the exhibit sharing stories, laughing, and talking about all things Bob Ross and *The Joy of Painting*.

As a young man on the autism spectrum, Connor's dad noted that relationships are particularly important for making Connor feel comfortable in new settings. Once they had returned home Gary sent an email to thank Minnetrista for making their trip extra special. He said, "We needed a fun weekend away from home and you made that happen."



exhibits

Minnetrista Museum & Gardens presented a full and diverse schedule of exhibitions in 2021.



- Giants, Dragons, and Unicorns: The World of Mythic Creatures, January 23 May 9, 2021
- Annual Juried Art Show, March 13 April 11, 2021
- Leonardo's Lab, May 1 August 1, 2021
- Jarring Our Memories, May 8 August 1, 2021
- Framed: Step Into Art, June 5 September 5, 2021
- Celebrating Service, July 7, 2021 present
- FIX: Heartbreak and Hope Inside Our Opioid Crisis, August 28, 2021 May 1, 2022
- Open Space: Art About the Land, October 1 November 7, 2021
- The Joy of Painting, Season 2 Paintings, October 29, 2021 present
- Nature's Blueprints, November 13, 2021 January 9, 2022



year in numbers

	2019	2020	2021
Total Exhibition Visitors	7,491	5,638	16,607
Total Program Registrants	1,041	522	2,161
Farmers Market Attendance	32,253	21,407	26,274
Signature Event Attendees	12,749	2,198	12,121
Volunteer Hours	5,708	933	2,440

Tourist, all raction

In 2021, we welcomed visitors from 46 states plus Puerto Rico and Canada!

The furthest traveled visitor came from 4,373 miles away –

Honolulu, Hawaii!



financials

REVENUE



- \$2,530,000 BALL BROTHERS FOUNDATION
- \$1,050,000 GEORGE AND FRANCES BALL FOUNDATION
 - \$682,816 EARNED REVENUE
- \$184,737 ENDOWMENT INCOME
- \$185,830 CONTRIBUTED REVENUE
- \$661,059 **SPECIAL PROJECTS REVENUE**

\$5,294,442 TOTAL

EXPENSES



- \$1,173,913 PROGRAMS & SIGNATURE EVENTS
- \$776,451 **COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITS**
- \$1,043,421 FACILITIES & GROUNDS
 - \$797,695 ADMINISTRATION
 - \$294,390 DEVELOPMENT
- \$615,679 **COST OF SALES**
- \$448,409 SPECIAL PROJECTS EXPENSES

\$5,149,958 TOTAL







2021 supporters



FOUNDERS

Minnetrista celebrates the Foundations that made the first contributions supporting the establishment of the organization.

Ball Brothers Foundation
George and Frances Ball Foundation

FOUNDERS FUND ENDOWMENT

CATALYST CIRCLE

We appreciate the individuals and organizations that have made lifetime gifts of \$25,000 or more to the Minnetrista Founders Fund Endowment.

Stefan & Joan Anderson Ball Brothers Foundation

Edmund F. and Virginia B. Ball Foundation

Frank & Rosemary Ball

George and Frances Ball Foundation

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Nancy J. Smith

Terry & Cheryl Walker

The Winchester Foundation

Marjorie P. Zeigler

2021 ENDOWMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to those individuals and organizations that contributed to the Minnetrista Founders Fund Endowment in 2021.

Steve & Mary Avila

Diane Barts

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George & Holly Buss

Phil & Beth Dunn

Edmund F. & Virginia B. Ball Foundation

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Doris J. Lawhead

Peggy Lawrence

Brian Peterson

Edmund F. & Jane Petty

Jean & Paul Scott

Carol E. Seals

2021 ANNUAL FUND SUPPORTERS

Minnetrista celebrates the individuals that made unrestricted contributions to make our programming possible.

OAKHURST CIRCLE

Stefan & Joan Anderson





Douglas & Jacquelyn Bakken Linda Branam Betty Brewer & Steve Perry Leslie Clemens Gorden & Pamela Cox Greg Huffman Ruth Jennerjahn Amanda Cay Jones Robert Kersey Eric Lin James Mitchell Daryl & Linda Morrical Tammy & Dave Phillips Donna Polcz Estate of Elizabeth Roos Nancy J. Smith Van & Margaret Smith

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Claudia & Clayton Bonnell
Sally & Scott Bowman
Stephen Brand
Ralph & Elizabeth Bremigan
Juanita Bruns
Bill & Judith Buntin

You made it possible

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, 2021 represented a strong year of recovery for Minnetrista!

Many of you are appearing for the first time on this list! 175 new donors supported Minnetrista in 2021!

The average first time donation to Minnetrista in 2021 was \$41.85!

46 households increased their donations to Minnetrista in 2021!

MAPLEWOOD CIRCLE CONTINUED

Dr. Faye Chechowich & Dr. Tom S. Schroeder

Chris & Kristen Cook

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Tammy Pontius

Barb & Max Rudicel

Purlen Muhleman

James Potter

John & Judy Rust

Jane & Todd Murray

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Eric Saunders

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Cheryl Steele

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Sharon Stewart & George Halleck

Heather Stone

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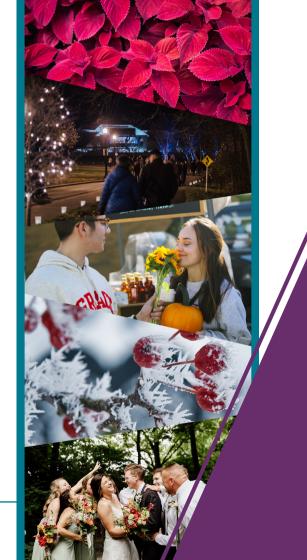
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