

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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MISSION

Provide relevant educational and entertaining opportunities within the region that exceed customer expectations, while preserving our community's vibrant cultural history.

VISION

The Durham Museum will serve as a recognized, premier resource for education, entertainment and historical preservation in our region. We will be the venue of choice in our market by providing a unique, engaging and memorable experience professionally presented to every customer.

FROM THE CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





Dear Friends,

In 2025, The Durham Museum celebrated an extraordinary milestone: our 50th anniversary. The occasion invited us to reflect not only on how far the museum has come, but also on the vision, generosity and determination that made its journey possible.

In 1975, a group of dedicated Omaha citizens came together to preserve the city's historic Union Station and create the Western Heritage Museum. Their work began with a belief that this remarkable building and the stories held within it were worth saving. Fifty years later, that conviction continues to guide The Durham Museum.

Our responsibility to carry that vision forward was reflected in the completion of Union Station's roof replacement, a major investment that will help protect this National Historic Landmark for generations to come. It was a fitting accomplishment during an anniversary year that celebrated the museum's past while strengthening its future.

The year also reminded us that a museum is shaped by far more than its building or collections. It is shaped by the students who encounter history for the first time, the families who return year after year, the volunteers who generously share their time and the members, donors and community partners whose support makes every aspect of our work possible.

Throughout this report, you will see the many ways The Durham carried its mission forward in 2025. You will also see the breadth of a community that continues to believe in the importance of preserving our past, creating meaningful opportunities for learning and ensuring Union Station remains a place of discovery and connection.

As we look toward the next 50 years, we do so with gratitude and a renewed sense of responsibility. We are proud of all that has been accomplished, inspired by those who brought the museum to this moment and excited about the opportunities still ahead.

Thank you for being part of The Durham Museum's story and for helping shape its future.

Gratefully,

Stephanie Daubert
Board Chair

Christi Janssen
Executive Director



50 YEARS PRESERVING THE PAST



INSPIRING THE FUTURE



Abraham Lincoln: President, Emancipator, Corporate Pitchman



Antarctic Dinosaurs

YEAR IN REVIEW



Beyond the Ice lecture featuring Dr. Nathan Smith and Dr. Ashley Poust



Flappers and Fizz 21-and-over event



Martin Luther King Jr. Community Day

The Durham Museum marked a half-century of discovery in 2025 as we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Through exhibitions, educational programs, special events and beloved traditions, visitors of all ages connected with the stories that have shaped Omaha while celebrating the museum's next chapter.

The year began with ***Abraham Lincoln: President, Emancipator, Corporate Pitchman***, a multisensory exhibition created to engage audiences of all abilities, especially those who are blind or visually impaired. It offered a fresh perspective on Lincoln's life, presidency and enduring legacy. In conjunction with the exhibition, **Martin Luther King Jr. Community Day** welcomed more than 2,300 guests on January 19 for performances, exhibits and hands-on activities celebrating Dr. King's legacy, introducing attendees to local organizations serving the community.

Spring brought ***Antarctic Dinosaurs*** from Chicago's Field Museum. Fossils, projection mapping and interactive displays revealed a continent once covered by forests and inhabited by dinosaurs while highlighting the science researchers use today to understand its prehistoric past. Nearly 46,000 guests, including thousands of students on field trips, explored the exhibition. Companion programs carried the experience beyond the gallery.

Families participated in **"Stomp, Chomp, Roar," STEAM workshops** and a special visit from **paleontologists Dr. Nathan Smith and Dr. Ashley Poust**. Younger children enjoyed the **Prehistoric Playground**, a hands-on space created to encourage curiosity and imaginative play.

Adults also found new ways to connect with the museum. In February, more than 400 guests dressed in 1920s attire for the return of **Flappers and Fizz**, a lively Prohibition-era speakeasy featuring dancing, games and themed entertainment. The event launched a three-part series designed to offer adult audiences distinctive ways to engage with history and culture.

In May, The Durham Museum joined the citywide **Common Senses Festival**, which highlighted the intersections of art, science and accessibility. Created in collaboration with Autism Action Partnership, "Going Up: The Elevator Experience" invited guests to ride the museum's glass elevator and encounter Union Station from a new perspective as part of the festival's multisite focus on inclusion and community connection.



Spring into STEAM programming

Creativity took center stage last summer with ***Animation Academy***, an interactive exhibition exploring how animated stories are made. Guests experimented with stop-motion animation, storyboarding and character design. The companion display, ***Storytellers: Artists from Our Own Backyard***, showcased Nebraska animators, illustrators and visual storytellers. Workshops and demonstrations also connected aspiring artists with professionals from local universities and studios, giving young creators an inside look at creative careers.

The museum's **50th Anniversary Celebration** on June 28 drew more than 2,300 people for a day of discovery, music and shared memories. Guests explored Union Station through scavenger hunts, pop-up artifact displays, trivia challenges and guided tours as live music energized the Suzanne and Walter Scott Great Hall. The old-fashioned Soda Fountain added a nostalgic touch with 1970s-era prices on hot dogs, sundaes and popcorn. A community memory wall invited guests to share favorite museum moments and recognize the volunteers, staff and community members who shaped the museum's first five decades. In August, ***The Durham Museum: The First 50 Years*** exhibition traced Union Station's transformation into a museum and celebrated the dedication, vision and passion of those who made that transformation possible.



Animation Academy Artist Workshops



50th Anniversary Celebration

Our anniversary year also brought a major investment in the museum's future. The **replacement of Union Station's roof** marked the final phase of a multiphase effort to restore and protect the exterior of the National Historic Landmark. The project helps safeguard the building, ensuring it continues welcoming visitors for generations to come.

Fall introduced exhibitions rooted in local history and popular culture. ***Woven with History: Timeless Textiles from the Ak-Sar-Ben Collection*** presented a rare, up-close look at ceremonial gowns and historic photographs spanning more than a century of Omaha's Ak-Sar-Ben coronation tradition.



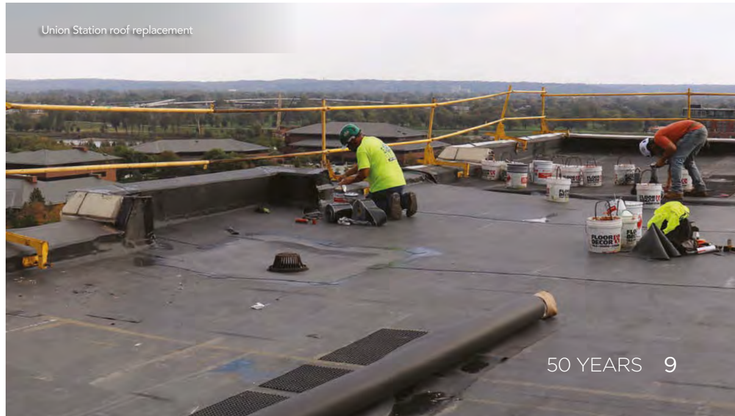
The Animation Academy: From Pencils to Pixels



Storytellers: Artists from Our Own Backyard



Escape the Station 21-and-over event



Union Station roof replacement

The museum's On Track Guild also championed the publication of ***Ak-Sar-Ben: Looking Back & Leading Onward***, which features one-of-a-kind objects from local collectors and The Durham's Ak-Sar-Ben collection.

In October, the high-energy exhibition ***HOCKEY: Faster Than Ever*** invited guests to test their skills and explore the science, history and culture of the sport. Its companion exhibition, ***Omaha's Hat Trick: Knights, Lancers and Mavericks***, celebrated the community's rich hockey heritage. Together, the exhibitions welcomed nearly 76,000 visitors.

Related programs extended the hockey theme with a **Fan Fest** featuring local sports teams, a **panel lecture with hockey leaders** and a special celebration during the museum's **22nd annual Teachers' Night**. Seasonal traditions also returned with **The Great HALL-oween Haunt**, featuring costumed characters, crafts and UNO's Moving Company dancers.

The holiday season brought the return of **Christmas at Union Station**. More than 54,000 guests attended the five-week celebration, marking the second-highest holiday attendance in the museum's history. The season featured beloved traditions including the **Tree Lighting Ceremony**, **Holiday Cultural Festival** and **Noon Year's Eve**, along with visits from Santa and performances by more than 40 community choirs.



HOCKEY: Faster Than Ever



Ak-Sar-Ben: Looking Back & Leading Onward



Teachers' Night



Holiday Cultural Festival





Woven with History: Timeless Textiles from the Ak-Sar-Ben Collection



Sock Skating Pond

The debut of the **Sock Skating Pond** added a new immersive winter experience featuring images of Omaha's snowy past drawn from the museum's extensive Photo Archive. The attraction quickly became a family favorite.

By year's end, The Durham Museum had served nearly 238,000 visitors and program participants, marking the fifth consecutive year our reach exceeded 200,000. Membership remained strong at more than 9,000 households. Partnerships with libraries and community organizations also provided free admission to more than 10,000 people, helping expand access to the museum.

Fifty years after opening, 2025 celebrated how far the museum has come while renewing our commitment to what comes next. Through exhibitions, educational programs, seasonal traditions, programs for adults, preservation efforts and community partnerships, The Durham Museum continued to honor the region's stories and invite new generations to discover the history that connects us all.

EXHIBIT & EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Major Exhibitions

Abraham Lincoln: President, Emancipator, Corporate Pitchman
Developed by Tactile Images in association with the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Getty Images, the National Federation of the Blind, and the Alliance for Inclusive Design and Experience (AIDE)

Antarctic Dinosaurs
Developed by the Field Museum in partnership with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Discovery Place – Charlotte NC, and the Natural History Museum of Utah

The Animation Academy: From Pencils to Pixels
Created by Stage 9 Exhibits and distributed by Exhibits Development Group

The American Revolution Experience
Created through a collaboration with the American Battlefield Trust and the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution

The Durham Museum: The First 50 Years
Developed by The Durham Museum

HOCKEY: Faster Than Ever
Produced by Flying Fish in collaboration with the Montréal Science Center

Woven with History: Timeless Textiles from the Ak-Sar-Ben Collection
Developed by The Durham Museum

Local Focus Exhibitions

Christmas Day Jailbreak

Pastime Print: Graham's Magazine

Job's Daughter's International: Supporting 100 Years of Worldwide Female Leadership

Omaha's World's Fair of Aviation, 1946

Storytellers: Artists from Our Own Backyard

Nature's Wrath: The 1975 Tornado

Omaha's Hat Trick: Knights, Lancers and Mavericks

Redefining Balance: The Impeachment of Justice Samuel Chase

Creighton Stadium

Special Programming & Community Events

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Day
***Antarctic Dinosaurs* Member Preview**
Stomp, Chomp Saturday Series
Spring into STEAM
Prehistoric Playground
Chattin' with Dr. Chattleton
Museum Insider Tours
Flappers and Fizz
River City History Tours
***Animation Academy* Member Preview**
***Animation Academy* Artist Workshops**
Crafts & Storytime at the Platform
Escape the Station
Scout Merit Badge Workshops
Nebraska SciFest Expo
$5 after 5 Series
50th Anniversary Summer Celebration
Coffee with Curatorial and Collections: 50 Years of Preservation
22nd Annual Teachers' Night
What is it Wednesday Series
Union Station Guided Tours
Ice Breaker! Hockey Fan Fest at The Durham
Durham After Dark
Hallo-weekend
The GREAT HALL-oween Haunt
Spooky Tales for Tots
Celebrate! at The Platform Series
Veterans Day Celebration
Minis at the Museum
Sentimental Journey
Coming Home for the Holidays Luncheon & Market
Tree Lighting Ceremony
Holiday Cultural Festival
Behind the Scenes Tour: Christmas at Union Station
Holiday Lights Family Festival
Holiday Concert Series
Family Nights with Santa
Noon Year's Eve Celebration

Special Presentations

Beyond the Ice: Unearthing Antarctic Dinosaurs
featuring guest speakers Dr. Nathan Smith and Dr. Ashley Poust

Institute for Holocaust Education presentation
featuring Laurie Pasler, Project Director for Courtroom 600

Train Rides, Tall Tales and Tailgates: A History of the Cornhusker Club Pullman Railcar
featuring Cate Kratville-Wrinn

Coffee & Conversation: Selling Abe, a Historic Icon
featuring Abbie Meek of the Allen County Public Library

Disney and the World War II Homefront
featuring guest speaker Bethanee Bemis

Digital Threads: Fashion, Film and the Future of Animation
featuring Michael Burton

Frozen Memories: Stories of Omaha's Past
featuring Mike Kemp, Gary S. Anderson, Ted Baer and Terry Leahy

Coming Home for the Holidays
featuring Jenn and Adam O'Neal, owners of PepperHarrow Farm


The GREAT HALL-oween Haunt



The American Revolution Experience


Ice Breaker! Hockey Fan Fest at The Durham



Noon Year's Eve

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

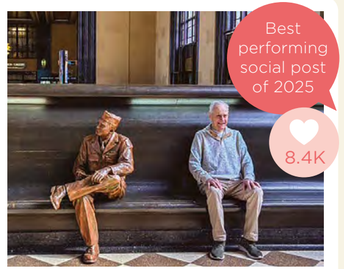
237,999
Annual Attendance
(fifth consecutive year that attendance surpassed 200,000)

9,072
Household Members
(third consecutive year that membership surpassed 9,000)

13,000+
Volunteer Hours
contributed by over 100 volunteers and members of the On Track Guild

11-14M
Annual Economic Impact
The Durham contributed an estimated $11-14M in annual economic impact, welcoming visitors from all 50 states and 39 countries.

SOCIAL MEDIA



Best performing social post of 2025

8.4K

The Durham Museum
Meet Lowell! The last time he sat on this bench, he was a 17-year-old train passenger set to join the Navy. Seventy years later, he returned as a visitor to The Durham Museum!

493,473 views • 8.4K likes • 146 comments • 383 shares

37,667
Facebook Followers
(6,000 new followers)

10,495
Instagram Followers

113,913
Total Social Media Engagements
(up 75%)



50th Anniversary Celebration pop-up talk


Museum LIVE!


On-site field trip


Museum Insider Tour

LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT

Throughout 2025, the museum continued its innovative approach to student programming. Field trips, long the heart and soul of any student's museum experience, continued to flourish, while our Digital Learning Initiative reached new audiences across the state and beyond. Meanwhile, expanded tours and lectures for adults brought new energy to the museum.

FAR-REACHING IMPACT

70,293	Students, student family members & teachers served
92,600	Total participants across all education programs
88	Of Nebraska's 93 counties served
75	Local and national collaborating organizations
600+	Unique schools
92%	Omaha area Title 1 schools served
90%	Omaha area elementary schools served

PARTICIPANTS IN SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMS

50,940	*Museum LIVE!* & virtual field trips
17,202	On-site field trips
2,151	Inclusive Museum Initiative
740	Teachers' Night

PARTICIPANTS IN PUBLIC PROGRAMS

2,847	Summer Camps
712	Scout Programs
13,211	Lecture and Public Tour Attendees



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

River City History Tours invite participants to discover Omaha's distinctive neighborhoods and historic sites by motorcoach and on foot. Each tour explores a compelling chapter of the city's past, from the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition and Omaha's bootlegging era to the dance halls that placed the city at the center of jazz history. Led by skilled docents, the tours combine careful research with engaging storytelling, helping participants see familiar places from a new perspective.

"Our guide was top-notch, and I felt like a tourist in my own hometown."

- Deanna, tour participant



Photo Archive Volunteers, circa 1980

PRESERVING HISTORY FOR 50 YEARS



16,414 Historic Photos Digitized in 2025

369,000+ Total Images Digitized Since Project Began

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

Shared History

The Photo Archive's impact extends far beyond the museum. Images from the collection appeared in books, documentaries, exhibitions, redevelopment projects and public programs during 2025. Staff also worked with the Ernie Chambers Legacy Library and Research Center to identify photographs documenting Omaha's African American communities, connecting preserved images with new audiences and future research.



The Final Ak-Sar-Ben Queen

Four Ak-Sar-Ben coronation gowns joined the collection in 2025, including the gown worn by the 2017 queen during the final year of the Ak-Sar-Ben coronation. The museum also acquired historic king and page costumes along with regalia from the final court, helping preserve the material history of a tradition that shaped Omaha civic life for more than a century.

2017 Ak-Sar-Ben queen gown worn by Blair Kellner. Donated by Kirk and Teresa Kellner.

Queen scepter. Donated by Aksarben Foundation.

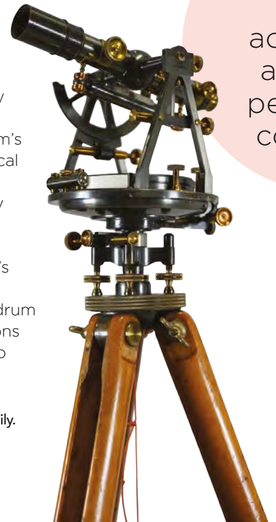


395 Byron Reed documents transcribed, researched and made searchable online

A poem from George Francis Train to Byron Reed, 1873. BRDOC-35-19

Stories from the Railroad

A collection assembled by Bill Wimmer added new dimensions to the museum's railroad collection. Technical tools, including a curve calculator and land survey instrument, document the work behind railroad operations, while children's china, photographs, publications and a snare drum reflect the people, traditions and daily life connected to the industry.



Land survey instrument
Donated by the Bill Wimmer family.

39 accessions added to permanent collection

Remembering Peony Park

A hot air balloon decoration from Peony Park preserves a colorful piece of local history. Susan Hill and her brother, Mike Adams, both worked at the park as teenagers. After it closed, their family purchased items at auction to save part of its legacy.



Peony Park hot air balloon basket. Donated by Hayden Adams and Susan Hill in memory of Mike Adams.

Photo: Peony Park Hot Air Balloon, The Durham Museum Photo Archive, 1994-65-52-1255

Coming of Age, 1983

THE YEAR IN STORIES

COMING FULL CIRCLE



Robert Bodnar joined the museum in 1977 as its first Director of Exhibits, helping shape how the young institution would share the region's history. He later created its first permanent exhibition, *Coming of Age*, which opened in 1983.

During the museum's 50th anniversary, Robert reconnected with The Durham and shared memories from those formative years. His firsthand perspective helped guide *The Durham Museum: The First 50 Years*, the museum-produced retrospective celebrating Union Station's transformation. His return created a meaningful link between the museum's earliest chapters and the institution it has become today.



REMEMBERING BILL GONZALEZ

In 2025, The Durham Museum mourned the loss of Bill Gonzalez, a longtime steward of the Photo Archive. Bill began as a volunteer before joining the staff, spending more than a decade helping researchers, visitors and members of the media discover Omaha's history.

For many, Bill became the face of the Photo Archive. His knowledge was matched by his warmth and genuine interest in those who sought his help. Even years after his retirement in 2020, people continued to call asking for Bill — sometimes for his expertise and sometimes simply to visit.

Those lasting connections reflected the generosity, curiosity and care he brought to the museum throughout his years of service.



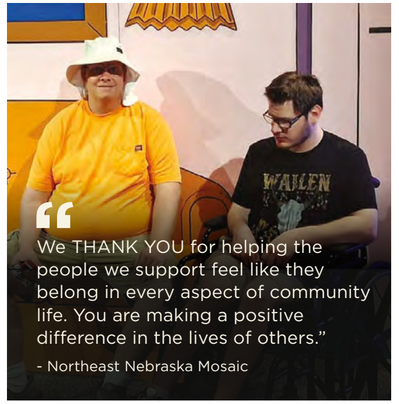
YOUNG HISTORY DETECTIVES

Students from House of Afros, Capes, and Curls became history detectives as they explored the people, places and stories of North Omaha. Working with collections and curatorial staff, they used the museum's Photo Archive to research historic addresses, connect images to real locations and examine how the neighborhood has changed.

A PLACE TO BELONG

Through the museum's Community Pass Program, four Mosaic locations regularly bring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to The Durham. The trains and hands-on experiences make the museum a favorite destination, but Mosaic staff say the welcome their groups receive is just as meaningful.

Museum staff, gallery guides and volunteers give guests the time and space to explore without feeling rushed or unwelcome.



"We THANK YOU for helping the people we support feel like they belong in every aspect of community life. You are making a positive difference in the lives of others."

- Northeast Nebraska Mosaic

During National Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Mosaic thanked the museum for helping the people it supports feel that they belong in every aspect of community life – a reminder that accessibility is about more than opening the doors. It is about ensuring every person who enters feels genuinely welcome.

WHERE A NEW LIFE BEGAN

When Peter Reinkordt returned to The Durham Museum in 2025 for a visit, he was returning to the place where his life in America began. On December 6, 1956, 13-year-old Peter arrived at Omaha's Union Station with his widowed mother after traveling from Munich. As he left the station, he was struck by Nebraska's wide roads, open landscape and immense sky – a dramatic contrast to the narrow streets, hills and forests of the German town where he had grown up.

"For me The Durham Museum will always feel like the Union Station I set foot in on December 6th, 1956."

- H. Peter Reinkordt

Peter went on to attend North High School and the University of Omaha, earn a doctorate from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and teach at Nebraska Wesleyan University and Doane University. Nearly seven decades later, Union Station remains inseparable from the journey that shaped his life.



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THE DURHAM SOCIETY

The Durham Society was established to provide designated support to The Durham Museum and its cultural and educational programming. This philanthropically-minded group is committed to raising the awareness of history's impact on our community and region.

HERITAGE CIRCLE $25,000

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Cindy M. and Mogens C. Bay
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Scott A. Robertson
Mary A. and John K. Wilson
Gail W. and the late
Michael B. Yanney

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Kathy Callahan Mrla and Louis G. Mrla
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Peggy and David L. Noyes
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Laura and William Vodvarka
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Aleida and George Weier
Frank P. Willkie
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Beth and Tim Wilson
Janice A. and Thomas C. Wilson
Janet and Henry E. Wojdyla
Nancy L. and Philip M. Wolf

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Sally B. and the late William B. Hanley
Kathy Hasselbalch
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Omaha Film Festival
Omaha Performing Arts
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Omaha Public Power District
Omaha Storm Chasers Baseball
Omaha Union Soccer
Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo
and Aquarium
Ooh De Lally
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Physician's Mutual Insurance Company
Roast Coffeehouse
The Rose Theater
Sips on 10th
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Urban Air Adventure Park
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The Bill Wimmer Family
Mary Fran Zeller

2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Durham Museum and The Durham Museum Foundation
Combined Statements of Financial Position

FINANCIAL POSITION

	2025	2024
Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents [A]	$8,336,429	$4,968,189
Investments [B]	19,957,951	19,200,340
Receivables	77,757	83,419
Contributions receivable [C]	1,128,734	878,325
Accrued interest	176,525	172,229
Inventory	56,435	52,097
Prepaid expenses	170,224	255,111
Property and equipment, net	7,816,344	7,061,014
Total Assets	**$37,720,399**	**$32,670,724**
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	$887,391	$1,158,476
Total Liabilities	$887,391	$1,158,476
Net Assets:		
Unrestricted	$13,309,577	$12,128,001
Temporarily restricted	3,152,548	4,013,364
Permanently restricted	20,370,883	15,370,883
Total Net Assets	$36,833,008	$31,512,248
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	**$37,720,399**	**$32,670,724**

(A) Cash and cash equivalents include $845,762 and $1,200,229 in 2025 and 2024, respectively, which is restricted with donor stipulations that limit the use of the funds.

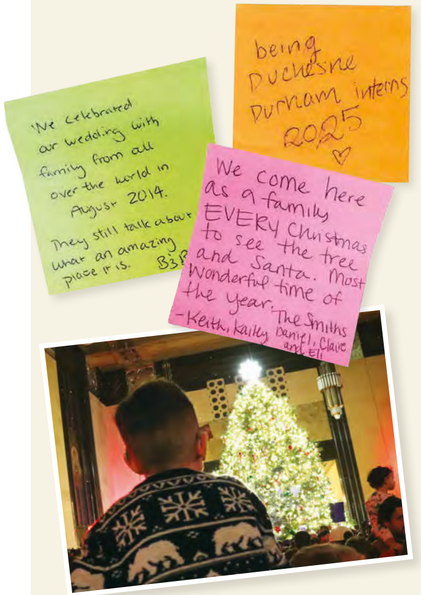
(B) Investments include $20,370,883 and $15,370,883 in 2025 and 2024, which have donor restrictions that require the funds to be maintained permanently but permit use of income earned from the investments.

(C) Contributions receivable include $350,000 and $700,000 in 2025 and 2024, respectively, which is restricted with donor stipulations that limit the use of the funds.

50 YEARS THE DURHAM MUSEUM

A HALF CENTURY OF MEMORIES

Throughout 2025, we invited visitors to share the moments that connect them to The Durham. From school trips to holiday traditions, hundreds of notes filled our memory board, reminding us that while history is preserved inside Union Station's walls, our greatest legacy is the community that brings it to life.





WAYS TO GIVE

INVEST IN HISTORY. INSPIRE THE FUTURE.

Your support ensures The Durham Museum continues to preserve Union Station, present world-class exhibitions, and deliver engaging educational programs. Gifts from visionary donors like you create experiences that connect our community to its past and inspire generations to come.

THE DURHAM SOCIETY

Support strategic initiatives that strengthen exhibitions, education, and preservation. Members enjoy exclusive behind-the-scenes access, private events, and recognition in museum publications.

MEMBERSHIP

Enjoy year-round access while supporting ongoing operations. Multiple tiers are available to match your level of engagement and passion for history.

ANNUAL FUND

Provide flexible support that bridges the gap between admission revenue and operating costs.

TARGETED FUNDS – DIRECT YOUR IMPACT

Choose an area that resonates most with you:

- **Education Fund** – Bring history to life for young minds in our community.
- **Preservation & Maintenance Fund** – Protect Union Station and its treasures.
- **Good Neighbor Museum Fund** – Help underwrite memberships for families facing financial challenges.
- **Special Projects** – Support upcoming exhibitions and capacity-building needs at the museum.

PLANNED GIVING – CREATE YOUR LEGACY

Include The Durham Museum in your estate plans and ensure a lasting impact on future generations.

To learn more about these opportunities and how your gift can make the greatest impact, please call 402-444-5071 or email development@durhammuseum.org.

Your gift transforms the museum's vision into reality.

402-444-5071

development@durhammuseum.org

Scan QR code to give today!

















50 YEARS THE DURHAM MUSEUM

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