



Environmental
Education Center



2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

Published August 2025

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, we are extremely proud of Sturgeon City's growth and the significant strides we've made in fulfilling the mission of our nonprofit. Our commitment to environmental and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) education, coupled with robust community engagement, is clearly demonstrated within this 2024-2025 Annual Report.

We successfully launched several impactful new programs this year, including EXPLORE Sturgeon City, our Beaks & Binoculars Bird Walk, and the empowering Girls in STEM Leadership Fellows. These initiatives have significantly broadened our reach and offered unique, hands-on learning experiences to a diverse range of participants.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to introduce our inaugural Teacher Appreciation event in August 2025. This complimentary evening is designed exclusively for Pre-K through college educators from both public and private schools. It is our way of extending a heartfelt thank you for their tireless dedication to shaping our community's future. Teachers will have the opportunity to unwind, enjoy engaging activities, refreshments, and exciting giveaways, all while discovering the many resources Sturgeon City has to offer.

Building on this momentum, our 2025-2026 year promises even more innovation with the addition of two key programs. The Eco-Leaders Program will be a year-long initiative for high school students in Onslow County and surrounding Eastern North Carolina. This program will cultivate the next generation of environmental stewards through hands-on research, leadership development, and community engagement. Additionally, our Silver Series will offer engaging classes specifically tailored for lifelong learners aged 60 and better, allowing them to explore fascinating topics in environmental science and STEAM with our expert educators.

We invite you to review our annual report to see the profound impact Sturgeon City is having on our community and to learn more about our exciting Phase II plans for the future.

Warm regards,

DON HERRING
Board Chair

LISA MURABITO
Executive Director

2024-2025 Board of Directors

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Mission

At Sturgeon City, our mission is to champion environmental and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM) education, shaping the future by nurturing leaders and stewards of both the environment and the sciences.

Vision

Our vision embraces a future where Sturgeon City’s environmental and STEAM education sparks transformative change. We foresee vibrant communities guided by individuals who are not just passionate environmental stewards but also innovative thinkers in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics.

Core Values

- 1. Educational Excellence and Innovation:** Focusing on providing top-tier environmental and STEAM education while fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation.
- 2. Environmental Stewardship:** Prioritizing the protection and preservation of the environment while nurturing a deep respect for the natural world.
- 3. Empowerment and Leadership Development:** Empowering individuals to become leaders and agents of change, both in environmental conservation and within STEAM disciplines.
- 4. Community Collaboration and Inclusion:** Actively engaging the community, promoting diversity and inclusion to inspire, support, and collaborate in achieving the organization's mission and vision.

July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 Year in Review

At Sturgeon City, we firmly believe that the most effective learning happens when it's hands-on, engaging, and genuinely fun. Our 2024-2025 programs and events stand as a testament to this philosophy, not only proving that environmental education and STEAM can be an exciting adventure for everyone, but also actively training the next generation of leaders committed to our planet.

2024-2025 Program And Events Numbers

20,851 Participants

317 Programs and Events

2000-2025 Program And Events Numbers

165,000+ Participants

2850+ Programs and Events





FIELD TRIPS OVERALL

93 Field Trips

5,550 Participants

OUT OF COUNTY

22 Out of County Field Trips

1,250 Participants

OUTREACHES

36 Outreaches

7,025 Participants

EVENTS

10 Events

3,433 Participants



2024-2025 Our Programs

Sturgeon City Sprouts

A caregiver and me program for 1-4 years old children. Each month has a fun new science theme.

Little Learners

This is a drop off program designed for children 3-5 years old. Each month is a fun new interactive program!

Homeschool Science, Teen Homeschool Science, and Family Homeschool Science

Sturgeon City teaches environment and science requirement for the homeschool curriculum. It is themed each week and taught for ages 6-17.

EXPLORE Sturgeon City

Our EXPLORE Sturgeon City program invited participants to discover all that Sturgeon City has to offer at their leisure, transforming a visit into a day of dynamic learning and play!

Beaks and Binoculars Bird Walk

The Beaks & Binoculars Bird Walk offers a fantastic opportunity for all ages to connect with local wildlife through immersive observation, turning a simple walk into an exciting journey of discovery.

Girls in STEM Leadership Fellows

Girls in STEM Leadership Fellows is a comprehensive program designed to empower young women to pursue careers in STEM fields. Through a combination of academic rigor, leadership development, hands-on learning, and mentorship, participants will gain the skills and confidence needed to succeed in STEM.. In partnership with Onslow County Schools, North Carolina Center for Afterschool Program, and STEM SENC.

Kids Night Out

Sturgeon City's Kids Night Out is the perfect solution for parents looking to unwind while their children ages 6-12 enjoy a fun-filled evening of hands-on activities, pizza, and a movie .

Teen Science Cafe

Teen Science Cafés are for teens and led by teens. They bring students together in an informal setting to learn about science and technology. This program is recommended for participants ages 13-17. This is a FREE event!

Camp Sturgeon Spring Break and Summer Camp

Camp Sturgeon is a series of weekly summer camps. There are multiple age groups and themes to choose from.

Field Trip & Outreach

Sturgeon City Environmental Education Center offers a variety of field trip options for schools and community groups that are looking to enrich their educational experiences with hands-on learning opportunities in nature.

Outreach Programs Are Where Sturgeon City Educators Will Bring Science To Your Classroom!

Our Event Highlights

LEGO TOURNAMENT



Thank you to Walmart #1298
Jacksonville Supercenter for your
generous grant for the 2024 Lego
Tournament

FALL FAMILY BINGO



Thank you to for their generous donations of prizes:
Herring Farms; Hilton Garden Inn Jacksonville, NC, Emerald Isle
Parrothead Club, Home2 Suites Jacksonville, NC; Fernando and
Elizabeth Schiefelbein, Planet Fitness, First Citizens Bank, Texas
Roadhouse, The Lazy Daisy Bookshop, AMC Kalli 12; Zing Zumm
Children's Museum of Jacksonville, Pelican Snoballs, Dairy Queen,
Rainbow in Me, Red Robin, Starbucks 1395D Western Blvd, Darel's
Bakery, A&W Mobile Repair, Nothing Bundt Cakes, NC Museum of
Natural Science, and Duke Energy

SPOOKTACULAR



First
Citizens
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PUBLIX SUPER MARKETS
CHARITIES

Sam's
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Foundation

Sam's Club Store #6573

NIGHTLAB DETECTIVES AND DRINKS



JOLLY JAMBOREE



NIGHTLAB BOOZY BIOLOGY



SPRING FAMILY BINGO



Presenting Sponsor:



Grant provided by:



Jacksonville Walmart #7137

Thank you to for their generous donations of prizes:
Herring Farms; Hilton Garden Inn Jacksonville, NC, Texas
Roadhouse, Cracked-It Escape Games, and Tim and Tabitha
Chadwick





2024 Summer Bash

PRESENTING SPONSORS:



Silent Auction Donors: Don and Marianne Herring, Home2Suites, Texas Roadhouse, Hilton Garden Inn, Mission BBQ, The Tattered Cottage, Ralph Leeds, Crystal Coastal Ghost Tours, End of Days Distillery, Brawes Bees Farm, Duke Energy, and Rainbow in Me





2025 Earth Day Celebration and Craft Fair

2025 EARTH DAY CELEBRATION & CRAFT FAIR SPONSORED BY:





Sturgeon City Environmental Education Center Event Space Rentals

105

Rentals



14,960

Attendees

699

Overnight stays



Rentals from July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025

Donors & Supporters

This list represents gifts given from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 and includes in-kind and memorial gifts. Every attempt was made to ensure the accuracy of this list. We sincerely regret any errors or omissions.



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A&W Mobile Repair
AMC Kalli 12
Mr. Lucas Alexander
Mrs. Ximena and Mr. Alvaro Angulo
Mrs. Beverly and Mr. Bill Barr
In Honor of Pat Donovan Brandenburg
Brawes Bee Farm
Mrs. Tabitha and Mr. Tim Chadwick
Mr. Skip and Mrs. Karla Clarkson
Mr. Reed Counts
Cracked It Escape Games
Crystal Coast Ghost Tours
Dairy Queen
Mr. Bob and Mrs. Lois Dupuis
End of Days Distillery
Mr. John J Foran
Dr. Don and Mrs. Marianne Herring
Herring Farms
Home2 Suites Jacksonville, NC
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Publix - Jacksonville, NC
Rainbow in Me
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Mr. Fernando and Mrs. Elizabeth Schiefelbein
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Spradling
In Memory of John O. Stevenson
The Tattered Cottage
Texas Roadhouse Jacksonville, NC
Mr. and Mrs. Huck Venters
Ms. Lauren Wargo
Mr. James Wheeler
Dr. Paul and Mrs. Mary Anne Williams
WillScot Mobile
Zing Zumm Children's Museum of Jacksonville

2000-2025 Donors

Sturgeon City Visionaries 100,000+

- City of Jacksonville, NC
- Duke Energy Foundation
- Golden LEAF Foundation
- Jacksonville Tourism Development Authority
- Marine Federal Credit Union
- Modern Exterminating, Mr. Charles and Mrs. Lea Efird
- NC Dept Division of Marine Fisheries
- NC Science Museum Grant Program
- Onslow County

Society \$50,000-99,999

- First National Bank
- Jones-Onslow EMC
- Martin Family Endowment
- United Way of Onslow County
- Walmart Foundation
- Wells Fargo Foundation

Benefactors \$25,000-49,999

- Anonymous
- Burroughs Wellcome Fund
- Coastal Enterprises
- Glasko Smith Kline Ribbon of Hope
- Golden Corral, Mr. Billy and Mrs. Julee Sewell
- Onslow Caring Communities Foundation
- PNC Foundation
- Mr. Edwin "Eddie" Rose
- Sanders Ford
- SIA Group
- Truist
- Tucker Foundation
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Mr. and Mrs. Huck Venters

2000-2025 Donors

Patrons \$10,000-24,999

- *Black Friday Fishing Tournament*
- *Brumbaugh, Mu and King, PA*
- *Coldwell Banker Seacoast Advantage*
- *First Citizens Bank*
- *Mr. and Mrs. George Jones*
- *NC Council for the Arts*
- *Parker and Associates*
- *Ms. Debra Ray, ABA Rental Properties*
- *Dr. Robert Sheegog*
- *Telus*

Stewards \$5,000-9,999

- Mr. John and Mrs. Faye Carter
- Mr. Jeff and Mrs. April Clark
- Mr. Marty and Mrs. Brenda Goldman
- Mr. Glenn Hargett and Mr. Everett Vaughn
- Dr. Don and Mrs. Marianne Herring, Herring Farms
- Kohl's Cares
- Ms. Sheila Pierce Knight
- OceanFest
- Mr. and Mrs. Ron Massey
- NC Soil and Water Conservation
- Mr. John Rouse
- New River Rotary
- Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- Piney Green Electric
- In Memory of John O. Stevenson, Mrs. Susan Stevenson
- Dr. Alex Willis



Volunteers and Interns Spotlight



Deja

I helped create ideas for kids of all ages and cultures from 1st- 3rd grade through my involvement in a Spanish internship at the Sturgeon City Environmental Center. I acquired hands-on experience creating bilingual lesson plans that skillfully combined language immersion and environmental science. The value of accessibility and storytelling in STEAM education was reaffirmed by working directly with multilingual youth. Leading field trips and seeing students engage with nature in both Spanish and English gave me a deep sense of purpose. My confidence as a teacher dedicated to linguistic empowerment, community involvement, and inclusivity was bolstered by this internship.



Stephanie

I recently graduated college with a chemistry degree and enjoy volunteering at Sturgeon City and sharing my passion for science with the kids! It's so rewarding to see their faces light up when they understand something and are able to explain it themselves.



Josie

Access to resources and support can be limited for a child passionate about science, especially when their interests fall outside of the standard curriculum at school. That's why I love Sturgeon City's mission to inspire, encourage, and make S.T.E.A.M. education accessible for all ages. I know I would've truly appreciated their programs and opportunities when I was younger, and I'm grateful to help make an impact by volunteering today.

1,343.5

Volunteer Hours





Next Steps

Imagine stepping into a vibrant hub of discovery and learning!

- Transforming the iconic Biotower into an engaging open-air exhibit, a living testament to the Wilson Bay Initiative and the fascinating story of the former wastewater treatment plant's evolution into the environmental haven we know today.
- Dedicated exhibit space
 - Local Flora and Fauna with biofacts exhibit
 - Coastal and Oysters exhibit
 - Fossils and Geology exhibit
 - STEAM exhibit with interactive activities
 - Charming Gift Shop



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND POLLINATION GARDEN



Green Time Not Screen Time: Cultivating a Sustainable Future

Sturgeon City is developing outdoor classrooms and a pollination garden to immerse our community in nature. This initiative includes **two pavilions** for expanded program capacity and field trips, featuring **permeable pavers** for sustainable drainage. **Multi-level raised garden beds** will ensure accessibility for all ages and mobilities.

These **living laboratories** will educate visitors on pollinators and environmental stewardship. The garden will offer **interactive signage, seating, lighting, and art** to enhance the visitor experience, while the pavilions will also serve as a picturesque event venue.

Join us in promoting "**Green Time Not Screen Time**." Spending time outdoors reduces stress, improves mental health, and boosts creativity. Together, we can inspire future generations to become responsible stewards of our planet.





✉ director@sturgeoncity.org

🌐 www.sturgeoncity.org

📍 50 Court St. Jacksonville, NC

☎ 910.750.5876

We are immensely grateful to all our donors and volunteers. It was your invaluable support and outstanding generosity that made our achievements a reality.