in community
Working here, surrounded by collections that represent the natural and cultural history — and present day — of Washington state and its diverse residents, I can’t help but feel connected to the people, the land, and the knowledge that make the Burke strong and enhance the museum experience.

This sense of connection is what it means to be part of a community, and community — in tandem with collections — is the powerful engine at the heart of the Burke Museum. In workrooms and classrooms, scientists, knowledge keepers, and students of all ages share their wisdom and approaches to understanding the past and preparing for the future. In offices, over coffee, and on video, Burke staff and volunteers collaborate to care for the museum and meet its mission. In galleries and exhibit spaces, curated collections of objects and a variety of narratives encourage guests to consider their relationship to and place in the world.

Inside this annual report you’ll find stories about the myriad ways in which the Burke has supported — and been supported by — visitors, members, donors, partners, and friends this year. We are deeply appreciative of each of these contributions and so very glad to be IN COMMUNITY with you.
Community is the bedrock of any thriving organization. From a fabulous behind-the-scenes member night to a successful spring fundraiser, the many communities that make up the Burke Museum came together this past fiscal year to learn, be inspired, and support the museum’s ongoing work. In 2022, we gathered, rediscovering the power of just being together. In 2023, we connected even more with our communities, celebrating the vital involvement and engagement of the many people who contribute to the life of the Burke. Thank you for all you do.

—Burke Museum Association

Community draws us all together. We represent many tribes, stories, and cultural practices. The Burke is home to impressive collections of all kinds, and staff and friends from diverse backgrounds. Thank you for supporting our work this year to create an inclusive museum community where all feel welcome and valued.

—Native American Advisory Board
in community with
RESEARCHERS
Collective Research

GORGONOPSANS ARE AN ICONIC GROUP OF SABER TOOTH carnivores that lived roughly 255 million years ago, but many aspects of their biology had not been studied until the last decade. Burke Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology Christian Sidor has worked to clarify the anatomy and relationships of these animals based on exquisitely preserved fossils collected during field work in Tanzania and Zambia.

Over the past year, Burke Paleontology Fossil Lab Manager Kelsie Abrams has prepared several gorgonopsian specimens relevant to Sidor’s research. While gorgonopsian skulls are comparatively well-documented, the rest of the skeleton is poorly understood, prompting Dr. Sidor and his team to publish papers on the sternum’s anatomy and the first description of a complete foot. An upcoming paper by student Fletcher Levy makes use of computerized tomography (CT) scans of a Zambian gorgonopsian to digitally show the individual bones as well as inner workings of the skull. There is no shortage of exciting research on this group of animals, so stay tuned for what they uncover next year!
BATS ARE AMAZING CREATURES, AND NOT JUST BECAUSE THEY consume a significant number of insects each night. Here at the Burke, Curator of Mammals Sharlene Santana is studying leaf-nosed bat specimens from the collections to investigate how bat molars evolved over time to meet varying diets. Phyllostomids, as they are known scientifically, are unique in that they include species that specialize in a variety of diets, such as insects, vertebrates, fruit, nectar, and even blood.

Dr. Santana, post-doctoral researcher Dave Grossnickle, multiple undergraduate students, and partners at the University of California Los Angeles now have a clear picture of the diversity of molar shapes across phyllostomids, along with which genetic and developmental factors play a role in determining those shapes. The team’s next step is to create a mathematical model that will predict molar shape based on these factors, which will enable scientists to visualize more fully how evolution produced the extraordinary diversity of bat molar shapes we see across bat species today.
Community Science

This Year, Burke Malacology Collections Manager Melissa Frey launched a community science research project called SLIME (Snails and slugs Living In Metropolitan Environments) Pacific Northwest, an initiative dedicated to documenting the presence and distribution of land snails and slugs in the Pacific Northwest. Dr. Frey enjoys connecting with other enthusiasts on the iNaturalist App, responding to each inquiry she receives. The SLIME Pacific Northwest project gives community scientists a tool to participate in the study and protection of local biodiversity, promote environmental stewardship, and engage with other community members. The project has also resulted in new scientific discoveries — more to come! To participate, visit inaturalist.org/projects/slime-pacific-northwest or scan this code:
IN AUGUST 2022, THE BURKE FISH COLLECTION WAS HONORED to provide a training workshop for Professor Peng Bun Ngor and three of his students, Kakada Pin, Samol Chhuoy, and Sophorn Uy, from the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The group is building Cambodia’s first fish collection at their university. Natural history information is sparse in the area, and most collections that do exist are held outside the region.

Working closely with Curator of Fishes Luke Tornabene and Ichthyology Collections Manager Katherine Maslenikov, the group learned best practices in building a fish collection and preserving specimens for long-term research. The immense biodiversity of the region is under threat due to overfishing, hydropower development, and habitat loss.
THE HELL CREEK PROJECT IN NORTHEASTERN MONTANA IS A labor of love for many people. Students, Burke curators and collections managers, K–12 teachers through the Burke DIG Field School program, and even ranchers have contributed to the unearthing of a duck-billed dinosaur that lived roughly 66M years ago. This find is unique because there are multiple pieces of the skeleton which are articulated (in the position they were in life).

Hell Creek Collections Manager and Wilson Mantilla Lab Director Dave DeMar and Paleontology Fossil Lab Manager Kelsie Abrams have been leading field crews to dig up this skeleton for the last three years, and Hell Creek Fossil Preparator Michael Holland and volunteers have been preparing all the bones. Ranchers Les, Jerri, and Corben Thomas have also been instrumental, using tractors to remove rocks and haul out large plaster “jackets” that house the fossils for transport to the lab. The Hell Creek project is led by Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology Greg Wilson Mantilla.
in community with
TRIBAL AND INDIGENOUS PARTNERS
THE ARTIST STUDIO WAS BUSIER THAN EVER THIS YEAR, with more than 25 artists working at the Burke and engaging with visitors. The studio, which features open doors and expansive windows, is a place for researchers, artists, and community members to work on active projects like weaving, carving, and painting using knowledge and connections drawn from our Burke collections. Burke visitors can see stunning pieces of art created right before their eyes and learn about the artists’ cultures.

The UW Canoe Family worked in the studio three times a week all year carving paddles to be used in the annual Canoe Journey. Additionally, several Tlingit Chilkat weavers applied their research of the Burke collections to create new blankets and robes. The Burke was also able to host artists for Free First Thursday — our busiest day of the month — so that visitors themselves could participate in relationship-building with communities. New Artist Studio Coordinator Emma Wong helped make the studio livelier and more accessible for all, and we’re excited to see what the future holds for the studio.
IN ADDITION TO WORKING WITH TRIBAL, STUDENT, education, research, visitor, and other communities, the Burke also focuses on its internal community: the people who work in and inhabit the building every day. In summer 2023, the Burke created a permanent position for Decolonization Manager Aaron McCanna (Yup’ik), which was made possible first by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and then from state funding. Aaron brings together Burke employees to discuss important diversity, equity, inclusion, and access topics, and advance museum initiatives, such as the upcoming video project “Beyond Buzzwords,” which opens the conversation into what terms like decolonization, healing, and celebration mean to people inside and outside the museum.
Ethical Repatriation

THE BURKE HAS SPENT 35 YEARS BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, developing repatriation policies, and returning ancestors and belongings to their lands, communities, and families. We have strong relationships with local tribes and international communities, and we are committed to addressing the harm that was created when these cultural belongings and ancestors were acquired by the museum. This is an ongoing process, requiring thoughtful conversation, collaboration, and, most of all, listening — which enables us to repatriate cultural items in ways that respect and honor tribal sovereignty. In April 2023, the museum hired Justice McNeeley (Iñupiaq) as repatriation coordinator, working closely with collections and administration staff to ensure the safe return of cultural material and ancestors to tribal nations and international communities. She also spends time educating visitors and others on the importance of repatriation.
STUDENTS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON in community with
4CULTURE AWARDED THE BURKE ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT a grant for a pilot program to create a more accessible gallery experience for vision-impaired members of the community. Archaeology partnered with the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind Youth Employment Solutions (YES2!) initiative to employ two high-school students to work on this project, which was led by UW anthropology/ethnomusicology graduate ('23) Lucinda Axtelle.

In collaboration with staff at the Burke, these visually impaired students developed education kits with audio, braille, and large print interpretation for visually impaired and neurodiverse learners. In addition, they created an audio guide for all visitors to experience the Our Material World gallery. This community-led guide includes a welcome in Lushootseed (the language used by many Coast Salish tribes), physical descriptions of the space, audio versions of the gallery text, and additional audio content provided by Indigenous members of the Burke staff.

Lucinda Axtelle was awarded the Dean’s Medal in the Arts in June 2023 for her work leading this project.
The purple camas flowers that bloom each spring in the Burke Meadow signal the coming of a new season and are enjoyed by students, staff, and visitors. Unfortunately, rabbits also enjoy them and have spent the last two seasons eating the majority of the stalks. This year, the Burke set out to understand how to preserve the plants and ensure a thriving prairie ecosystem on the UW campus. Using traditional materials — willow and dogwood whips — and employing traditional methods, students from the University of Washington’s Urban Landscape Architecture program and the Indigenous Food Family worked with Burke staff and tribal elders to construct woven “baskets” to safeguard these tasty, delicate seedlings from hungry rabbits and the feet of enthusiastic toddlers. The result? Rejuvenated flora and a successful model of community co-management of shared lands.
THE PRESENT-DAY AND ANCIENT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ISLAND Societies and Local Ecosystems (PAC-ISLES) project was back in full swing this year! Curator for Oceanic and Asian Culture Holly Barker and Curator of Fishes Luke Tornabene took nine UW Pacific Islander students on a research trip to American Samoa where they had the chance to learn directly from the waters, lands, and people who carry knowledge in fisheries and anthropology. Before the trip, these students conducted extensive research in the Burke collections.
in community with
EDUCATORS
THIS PAST YEAR, THE BURKE EDUCATION TEAM CONTINUED ITS long-standing partnership with the Northwest School for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children. This past year, educators on the BurkeMobile and Field Trip team met with teachers to learn more about their students’ needs and learning styles. This preparation helped BurkeMobile Educator Tiffany Barber write new biology lessons and tailor the content and materials for each class. In addition, BurkeMobile Lead Educator June Pen has been taking Signing Exact English lessons to enhance learning for these students.
By the Numbers

Each year, the Burke Education team broadens its outreach, not only in Washington state, but across the entire country. In FY23, Burke Education served:

73 WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS
206 FIELD TRIP GROUPS
553 BURKE BOX AND DIG BOX RENTALS
49 BURKEMOBILE VISITS

Burke Live! and DIG Field School served teachers and learners from 28 states:

2,480 YOUTH IN K–12 CLASSROOMS
across the United States tuned into our new DIG Virtual Visit webinars in spring 2023

50,629 TOTAL YOUTH

The total cost assistance awarded for these offerings was $25,947.25.
## FY 2023

### Revenue (000)
- UW In-kind Support: 6,054
- UW & State: 4,657
- Restricted Funds Released: 2,079
- Earned Income: 1,764
- Gifts: 958
- Endowment: 625

Total Revenue: $16,137

### Expenses (000)
- Research & Collections: 7,429
- Programs: 5,684
- Administration & Fundraising: 3,284

Total Expenses: $16,397

Change in Net Assets: ($260)
WITH DEEP GRATITUDE, WE RECOGNIZE THE GENEROSITY OF OUR DONORS WHO SUPPORTED THE BURKE IN THE PAST FISCAL YEAR.
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We have made every effort to be thorough and to represent each name accurately. If you note an error or omission, please contact the Burke Development Office at burkedev@uw.edu so that we can correct your listing.
PHOTOS