

Connections

IMPACT REPORT





CONNECTIONS

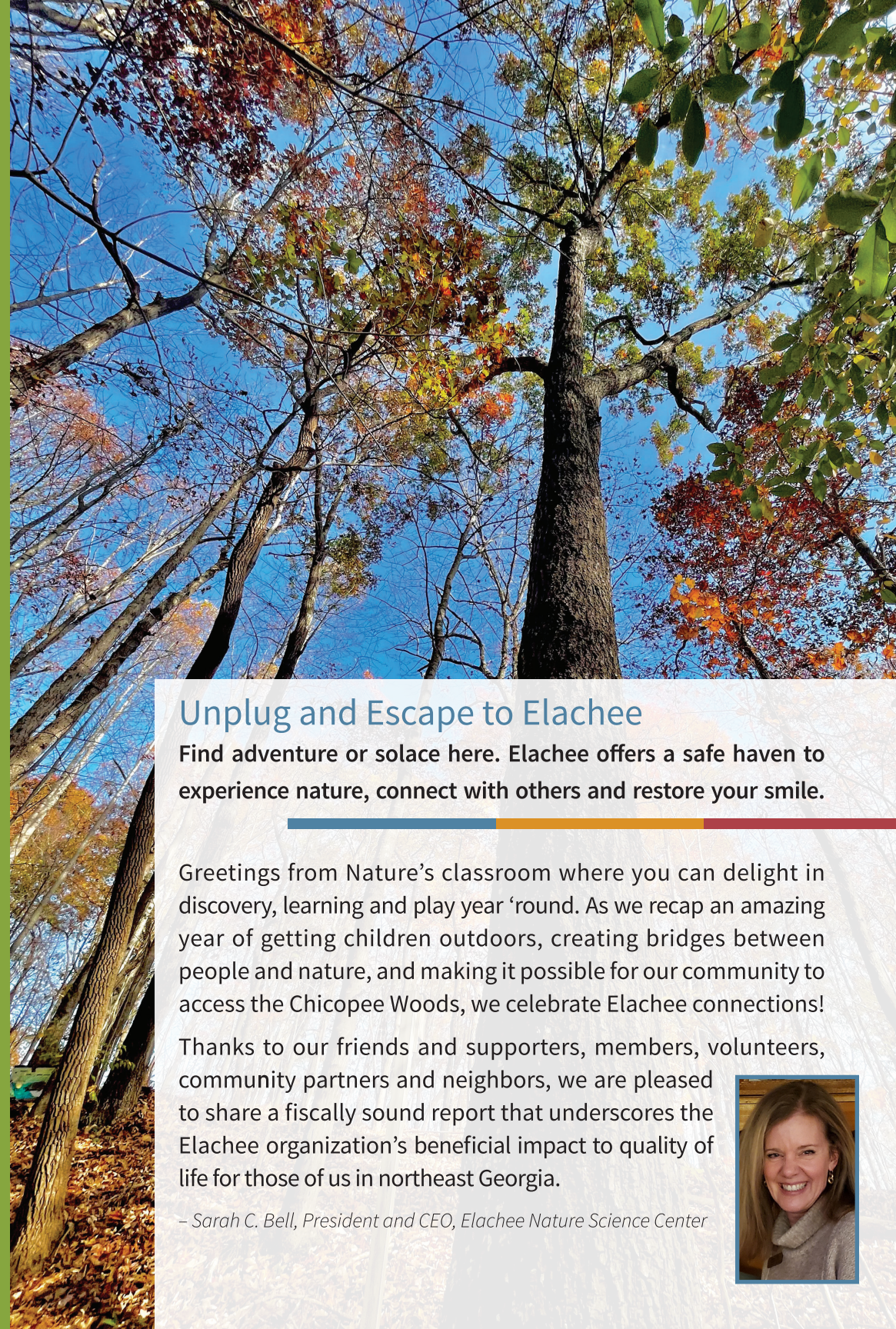
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Unplug and Escape to Elachee

Find adventure or solace here. Elachee offers a safe haven to experience nature, connect with others and restore your smile.

Greetings from Nature's classroom where you can delight in discovery, learning and play year 'round. As we recap an amazing year of getting children outdoors, creating bridges between people and nature, and making it possible for our community to access the Chicopee Woods, we celebrate Elachee connections!

Thanks to our friends and supporters, members, volunteers, community partners and neighbors, we are pleased to share a fiscally sound report that underscores the Elachee organization's beneficial impact to quality of life for those of us in northeast Georgia.

– Sarah C. Bell, President and CEO, Elachee Nature Science Center



Hands-on, Brains-on Learning

Hiking during an Elachee field trip a little boy smiled the biggest smile and said, “This is itching my brain in all the right places!”

28,912 students from 21 public school systems and 12 private settings participated in Elachee field trips in 2024.



Bringing Concepts into Focus

“I was working with a group of high school students completing the water quality index as part of Elachee’s Lake Lanier aquatic studies program. It is a complex process and the students had to follow step-by-step instructions,” explains Naturalist Gretchen Cox.

“At the end we discussed the results. Multiple students commented that chemistry made so much more sense after doing this program! They had spent an entire year studying chemistry, yet this field study provided hands-on activities that resulted in this ‘ah ha’ moment for these young people.”





I had just got a telescope this christmas and now I actually know what all im looking at. The star lab inspired me to learn more! I loved your story's they were very creative. Thank you for showing the star lab to 4th grade this year.

Starstruck Students

Taking Elachee 'on the road' is a big deal for students and teachers who may not have the chance to visit the Nature Center for their Elachee field trip.

"My students absolutely adored the stories and wealth of knowledge the naturalists had," shares a 4th Grade teacher from Big Creek Elementary.

"When I went to Flowery Branch Elementary with our portable planetarium Starlab, the young students were amazed by being 'transported to another place' inside their own media center," recalls a Naturalist. "Not only that, the teachers came up to me and shared their own Elachee experiences from when they were kids!"



Elachee in Your Classroom

"Every student in the school wanted to experience a program with Elachee and begged us to come back to teach their grade."

21% of Elachee field trips went 'on the road' in 2024 with Naturalists conducting outreach programs at area schools for students in grades PreK-12.





Unscripted Summer Encounters

“My son loves his Elachee days and how much time he gets to spend outdoors. I love that Camp kept him off of electronics and outside having fun!”

1,008

campers spent their summer at Camp Elachee 2024, with 200 children who attended at low or no cost.



Tradition and a Legacy

The Enns siblings enjoyed a grand adventure at Camp Elachee 2024. As Counselors-In-Training, Olivia and Grayson shared their love for this summer tradition with little brothers Elijah and Hunter.

“I grew up in Gainesville and attended the very first camp that Elachee hosted,” explains their mom Kimberly Westfall Enns. “I was a camper and then a CIT. It was a no-brainer to start sending our kids to Camp Elachee as soon as they were old enough!”

“Elachee has been very much a part of our lives since 1978 and vision for the community,” share Dave and Faye Westfall. “It is so special to see our grandchildren now enjoying what our children did at the same age.”





Everyday Wonder

“We love that Zoey gets to experience ‘the Elachee education’ because we see the results,” says Michael Koller, father of an Elachee Nature Academy student.

Elyse McDowell, parent of current and former students loves that her children “have been able to learn and explore in a unique way. It is great to be around like-minded friends and allow our kids to learn in nature, to climb in trees, to splash in rain puddles and play in the creek! We love that our kids aren’t scared to get a little messy and that they love to be outside. We are so thankful to have had the opportunity to let our kids grow up naturally.”

Sarah Foster whose young family has found a home of sorts at Elachee shares, “My husband and I have always loved hiking and the outdoors and wanted to instill that in our son. Elachee has been such an incredible place for all his nature ‘firsts.’ It has been so special watching him grow in this space and to experience it through his eyes.”



Growing Up Naturally

Young children navigate in nature with patient admiration as they explore the outdoors with wonder and fascination.

658

children participated in specialized outdoor learning in our Nature Academy, and Sprouts and No School Nature Day programs.





Epic Encounters

“Nature is ever changing. Like a good storyteller, the journey takes us places we would not imagine on our own.”

925 families and adults participated in seasonal special events at Elachee in 2024.



fun in nature





Knowledge is Power

Elachee offers family-friendly experiences to help kids of any age get comfortable with the world around them.

1,889 nature lovers of all ages participated in public environmental education programs in 2024.



From Awestruck to Engaged

“A granddad and his grandchildren were on a first visit to Elachee. I held a resident snake for the children to get a better look,” recalls Environmental Educator Katie Wiese.

“One child slowly reached out, going back in for another touch, then another and another, eventually petting the snake from head to tail. Awestruck, she whispered to her grandfather, ‘Do you think I can get a pet snake?’

“I get different reactions from guests as they interact with our animal ambassadors, never taking for granted the connection and difference I can make with someone who is curious or just needs a better understanding of these beautiful animals. It’s moments like this one that make my job special.”





Helping Hands

Whether fulfilling a weekly commitment or a one-day project, Elachee volunteers are our 'secret sauce.'

3,549 volunteer hours logged in 2024 by community friends to help at Elachee.



Friends Make Inviting Spaces

“Many of our guests come from all around Georgia, and the warmth and excitement they express in wanting to connect with nature warms my heart,” says Allyah Keith, a member of Elachee’s customer service squad. “I’ve had so many nice encounters that reaffirm my commitment to enhancing environmental education and access to green spaces.”

“The outdoors is truly providing a safe haven for people! I’m so excited to be apart of such a great team that leaves a huge impact on visitors, community members, and nature enthusiasts alike!”

for the love of Elachee





A Special Thanks to Our Supporters

We are so very grateful to our generous and loyal friends who power Elachee's excellence to provide best-in-class programming, contribute to quality of life for our community, offer opportunities to experience nature's wonder with top-notch amenities, and share the love of Elachee.

Donations received January 1 – December 31, 2024

↔ Deceased ✦ Recurring

Grants

Chantal and Tommy Bagwell Foundation, Inc.
Cargill, Inc.
MFS Foundation Fund
at North Georgia Community Foundation
Dr. Hart Joiner Endowment for Children and Youth
at North Georgia Community Foundation

Live Oak

Ed and Rosemary Dodd Designated Fund
at North Georgia Community Foundation

Water Oak

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McCormac, Mike and Robbie
Riverbrook Village Development Partners, LLC
Robert G. and Gloria S. Molloy Foundation
at North Georgia Community Foundation

Red Oak

Eisner, David and Adrienne Lloyd

Pin Oak

Armstrong, Carol Ann
Askew, Danny and Lynda
Bagwell, Emily
Barber, Steve and Ginny
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Chester, David and Gail
Cromartie, John and Julia
Delta Air Lines Matching Gifts Program
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Fritchley Ron and Martha
Gay, Jeff and Cindy
Gilliam, Steve and Susan
Girardeau, John and Judy
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McKinney, Hugh
McLendon, Sonja and Scott
Michael Steven Powell Legacy Fund at
Community Foundation for NE Georgia, Inc.
Muchow, Sharon and Dan
Paypal Giving Fund
Peggy Vardeman Early Childhood Education Fund
at North Georgia Community Foundation
Ralph and Mary Cleveland Foundation
Roy C. Moore Foundation
Sommer, Eula

Pin Oak continued

Timpone, Andrea and Julie Evans
Truelove, Dixie and Mike Smith
Turner, Wood & Smith Insurance Co.
Westfall, Dave and Faye
Whisenhunt, Kelvin and Anu
Whitehead, R.K. and Laura

Patron

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Nathan-Schrage Fund at
North Georgia Community Foundation
Rigel, Ed and Joan
Vlasz, Barbara

Heartwood

Bell, Mark and Sylvia
Boudreau, Diane
Brown, Paul and Barbara
Burd, John and Patricia
Burgess, John and Denise
Burnette, Greg and Alison
Cunningham, Lola
Dwyer, Eleanor
Dyer, Larry and Merrienne
GFWC Gainesville Phoenix Woman's Club
Glenn, Steven and Tamra
Grist, David and Sharon
Hamilton, John and Joanne
Hudson, Bill and Nancy
Jemo, Janet
Jenks, Tracy
Johnson, Brent and Beth
Jones, George and Starlet
Jones, Johnny and Betty Gail
Jones, William T.
Latta, Andrew and Elizabeth

Heartwood continued

Lebor, Andrew
Mall, Tom and Mary Anne
Maule, George and Sandra
McGlaun, Garry and Margaret
Mead Johnson Nutrition
Millican, Edward C.
Morris, Robert and Catherine
Nesbitt, Martha
O'Kane, Angela Vietti ✦
O'Sullivan, John
Outler, Helen
Pitts, Greg and Kathy
Rauch, Sam D.
Schardl, Nicholas and Tamra
Scobey, Sher
Sexton, Tom and Cathey
Stokes, Marcia
Tisinger, Richard and Marian
Turner, Susan
Unnold, Bonnie
Upchurch, Dorothy
Weldon, Layna
Wren, Ellen and Greg
Wynn, Jack

Acorn

Allison, Janet
Bloomerang Matching Gifts
Borden, Ed
Calmes, Patricia
Carmichael, James
Clark, Zach
Collison, Scott
Cook, Ed and Marjie Berman
Cooley, Jody and Lora
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Donaldson, John and Laura
Foster, John Scott
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Suchke, Dorothy
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Thompson, Pam and Jeff
Tolbert, Ann and Don
Vardeman, Johnny and Peggy
Walker, Kay and Chris
Williams, Kathy R.

Tributes

To Honor Sarah Bell
Bell, Mark and Sylvia

To Honor the Animal Room Crew
Anonymous

To Honor Peter Gordon
Mall, Tom and Mary Anne
Rigel, Ed and Joan

To Honor Dr. Linton Kucher
Nathan-Schrage Fund at North
Georgia Community Foundation

To Honor David Scobey
Scobey, Sher along with Scobey, Kirbi,
Trinity and Abbi

To Honor Andrea Timpone
Wynn, Jack

In Memory of Frank Armstrong
Jones, George and Starlet

In Memory of Joann M. Chalker
Chalker, Kathy

In Memory of Dr. and Mrs. Ed S. Cook
Millican, Edward C.

In Memory of Lowell Fulenwider
Rives, Elizabeth and William

In Memory of Dale Jaeger
Baker, Mark and Jennie Inglis

In Memory of Joseph (Doc) Johnson
Hopkins, Benjie and Marsha
Jenks, Tracy
Johnson, Julia
Jones, Linda
Morris, Texys
Muchow, Dan and Sharon
Nesbitt, Martha
Polley, Dale
Suchke, Dorothy
Timpone, Andrea and Julie Evans
Turner, Susan
Vardeman, Johnny and Peggy

In Memory of Alma S. Murray
Anonymous

In Memory of Pete Nesbitt
Nesbitt, Martha

In Memory of R. Edward Nix
Meadows, Joe and Donna

In Memory of Lloyd Unnold
Unnold, Bonnie

In-Kind Donations

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Romberg, Chris M.
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Shirey, Mark
Whiting, Mandi and Adam

2024 Annual Sponsors

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2024 Camp Elachee for Adults Fundraiser

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2024 Trillium Trek Trail Run

Milton Martin Toyota
Mincey Marble Manufacturing
Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc.
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2024 Wildlife Festival

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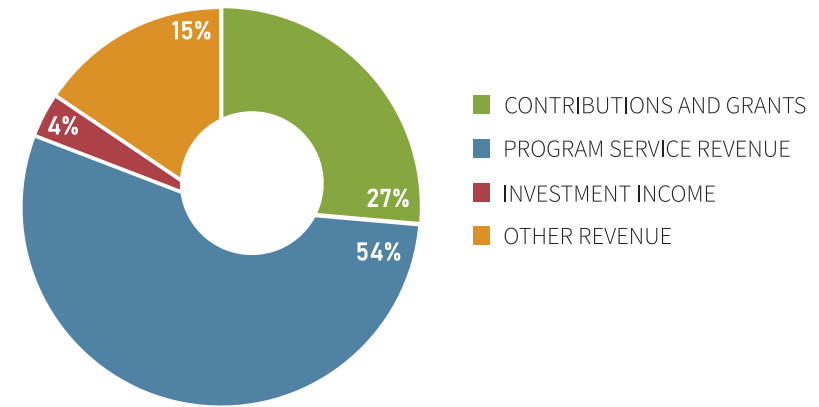


investing in nature

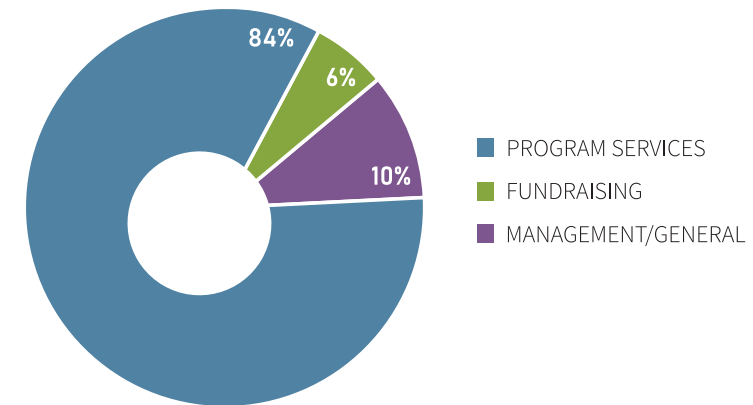


Fiscal Year 2024 June 1, 2023 to May 31, 2024

Fiscal 2024 Revenue Sources AUDITED



Fiscal 2024 Expenditure Sources AUDITED



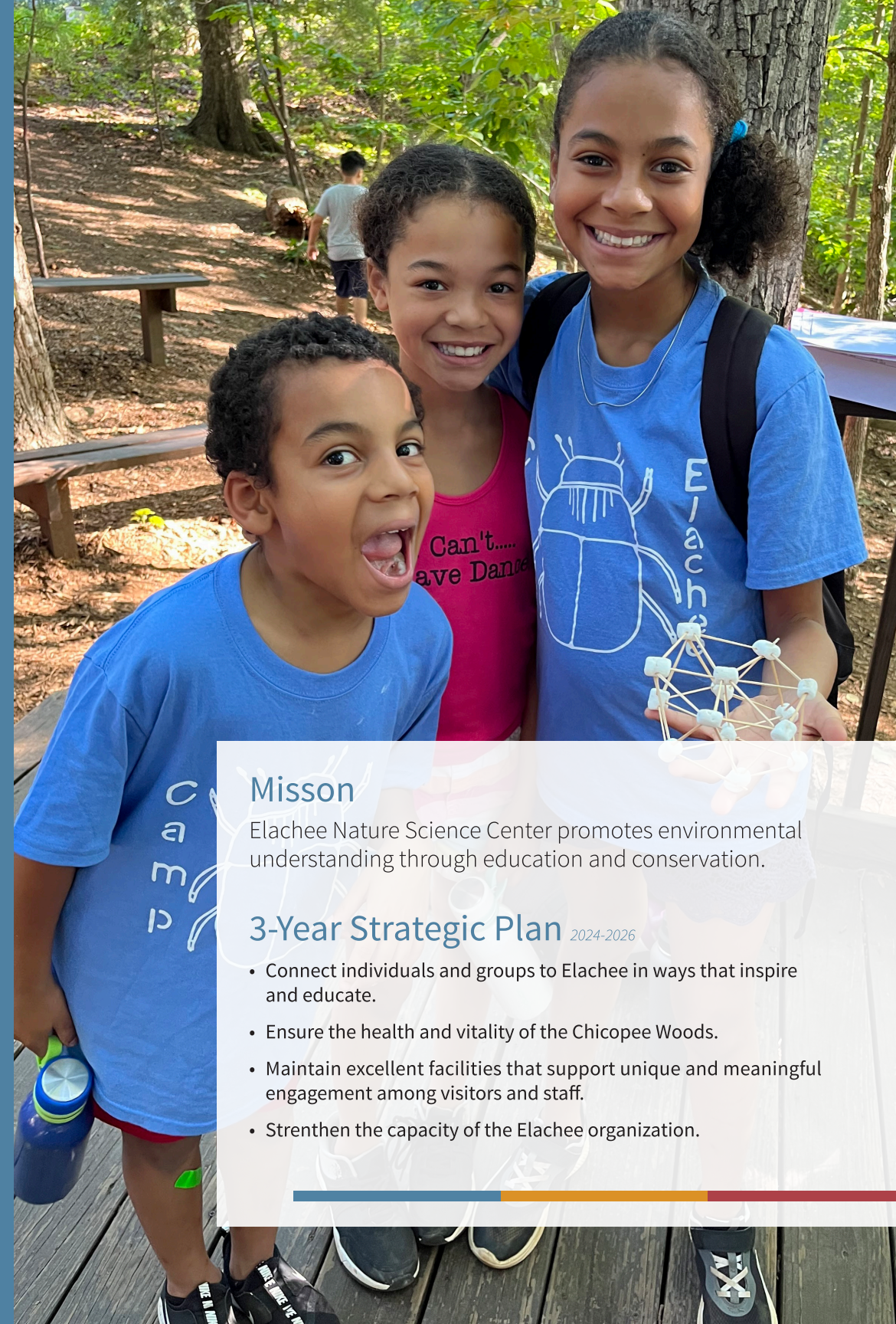
Elachee Nature Science Center is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization (EIN 58-1643768). Elachee supplements earned income with donations – grants, sponsorships, major and annual gifts from individuals, businesses and foundations – as part of a multi-faceted fundraising strategy to support our programs, care for our animal ambassadors, maintain the hiking trails, grounds and amenities we steward, for general operational needs and future sustainability. Learn more at www.elachee.org.





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Mission

Elachee Nature Science Center promotes environmental understanding through education and conservation.

3-Year Strategic Plan 2024-2026

- Connect individuals and groups to Elachee in ways that inspire and educate.
- Ensure the health and vitality of the Chicopee Woods.
- Maintain excellent facilities that support unique and meaningful engagement among visitors and staff.
- Strengthen the capacity of the Elachee organization.





 **Elachee**
Nature Science Center
In the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve

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