



2021 Annual Report



Dear Friends of Islands of Brilliance,

Gnomes, Aliens, Monsters, and more! Although life during 2021 was often confusing and, unpredictable, our students continued to amaze us every day! They demonstrated resilience, perseverance, and fearless creativity. They engaged in the community and encouraged and supported one another. They laughed and learned while becoming their best selves. So while 2021 was a challenging year, there was a lot to be thankful for at Islands of Brilliance.

We offered expanded distance learning options enabling us to serve students coast to coast. With careful planning, we were also able to resume in-person programming. In August we launched the Urban Gnome Project—hosted at each of the three Urban Ecology Center (UEC) branches. Our Brilliant Breakfast Club participants were back to ordering waffles at restaurants and meeting afterward for peer-to-peer discussions. And we found a temporary home at UWM's Lubar Entrepreneurship Center where we held Alien Monster Invasion and Holiday Hullabaloo workshops.

Going virtual hasn't slowed down our Digital Academy students: they designed stress relief devices for dental visits, critiqued Rangam's online user interface/experience; created amazing clothing designs for Kohl's; animated digital versions of the Urban Gnomes for the UEC's Hike MKE, and developed a social awareness campaign for mental health targeted at young adults. That is an impressive list of projects for our DA students!

Our biggest fundraising event, Colors & Chords was back! We were excited to once again gather together for Colors & Chords #7. Although it was a bit smaller than in the past, it was a very successful event with uplifting music, creativity, and celebration! It was wonderful to be together again.

2021 also brought some exciting recognition for the organization. IOB was honored to be recognized as a 2021 Force for Positive Change winner by Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation and Marquette University for its COVID-19 pivot to virtual learning. In addition, our own Margaret Fairbanks was recognized for her work in the community as one of 2021's Women of Influence by the Milwaukee Business Journal. Margaret has also been invited to join Governor Evers' Council on Autism. Great job Margaret!

Islands of Brilliance continues to make a difference in the lives of our students and families. We are more committed than ever to preparing our students for entering the workforce and changing society's perception of individuals with autism of individuals with autism. We know there are exciting developments in our future and look forward to meeting the challenges that lie ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kelly Scott
Board Chair

Our Mission

By using creativity, technology, and one-to-one guidance, we are positively changing personal perceptions of self and promoting broader community views of those on the autism spectrum from people with disabilities to people with capabilities.

FY 2021 Operating Revenues

\$533,716

+25% vs. 2020

41%	Private/Corporate Grants
37%	Earned Income
11%	Fundraising Events
11%	Individual Contributions

FY 2021 Operating Expenses

\$558,716

+13% vs. 2020

74%	Programming
14%	Administration
12%	Fundraising

2021 Highlights



IOB was presented a Force for Positive Change Award from the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) and Marquette University for the innovative and impactful way we effectively managed the pivot to virtual learning in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.



IOB's Cofounder and Chief Education Officer, Margaret Fairbanks, was chosen by the Milwaukee Business Journal as a Woman of Influence for her work helping students build life skills, confidence, and encouraging them to reach their true potential. In addition, Margaret was also appointed to Governor Evers' Autism Council where she will advise on strategies for implementing statewide support and services for children with autism.



Amy Mason, IOB's Director of Integrated Learning, was recognized nationally by the NBCOT (National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy) and received the Innovation Award for her efforts developing the client-centered and community-based Digital Academy curriculum.

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Gratitude

Thank you to the foundations, corporations, community partners, and individuals who provided financial and in-kind support in 2021 for programming and operations.

Private Foundations

Bader Philanthropies, Inc.
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Martha Wilson



2021 Fast Facts: 6,008 hours of programming provided; 203 Doodle Lounge sessions; 24 kokedamas created during Urban Gnome Project; 107.23 GB of Dropbox storage used; 432 slices of pizza served to staff, mentors, volunteers, and donors at the Urban Pizza Farm; 729 times “You’re on mute” was said; 1,120 still frames of stop motion taken; 7,200 seconds of peace provided in the Zen Den at Colors & Chords; 468,000 steps taken during the Urban Gnome Project; 197 “Scary Alerts” announced during workshops; 2,880 minutes of Lighthouse programming for parents; 688 miles driven to Colors & Chords from two longtime students from Minnesota.