

2023

RETREAT & REVIEW



ALLERTON
PARK & RETREAT CENTER



FROM THE DIRECTOR



As I was preparing to write this introduction, I made a quick journey through some of my past Retreat and Review letters. As I read different versions of “We faced many challenges and came out stronger for it,” I couldn’t help but feel like a broken record. However, that is exactly the way I’ve felt at the end of each of these recent years. 2020 threw us all for a loop that has changed the course of our futures, and sometimes it feels like we have been in recovery mode since.

In my five years as Allerton’s Director, strategic planning has always been important. Due to the nature of our funding, we must look ahead at least three years to identify priorities and budget accordingly. The past two years of uncertainty hindered our ability to know what was coming and how to proceed.

However, throughout 2022 we were able to move on from recuperation to planning for the future. We had some old challenges, some new challenges, and some staffing changes —

but overall we could see a new direction and started making plans to get there.

Now, because of that careful planning, we are ready for action. Our 2023 will bring a lot of changes — new public programs and events, new ways of experiencing Allerton’s natural world, and new facility updates. With our enthusiastic staff, dedicated volunteers and generous supporters, we have never been in a better position to implement our plans and achieve success.

The global pandemic that created so many challenges has also solidified the importance of places like Allerton — and I am confident that we have come out stronger. I am committed to our future, come what may, and I hope you’ll join me.

Derek Peterson

DEREK PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WHAT WE LOVED IN 2022

STAFF

As in fully staffed. About 50 percent of our full-time employees were new from the year before, providing fresh ideas and energy to our team.

ALL IN? YOU WERE!

Our eight-year ALL IN for Allerton campaign surpassed its \$8 million goal, raising \$8.9 million!

CONCERTS!

They were back, and bigger than ever, including 1,500 of you who attended the always-popular Irish Fest. Save the date for this year's concerts: June 3, July 7, Aug. 5, and Sept. 8 and 29.

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Poets, musicians, painters and playwrights were all on site as part of the Allerton In-Residence program.

DAY CAMPS

More than 200 youth took part in day camps last summer. Some came to play, some came to create art, and others to learn robotics, but everyone had fun! Registration for 2023 camps starts March 13!

HIKES

Natural Areas staff took visitors on dozens of hikes last year, including outings to hear night critters under the darkness of a new moon and daytime hikes to spot migratory birds. Register on our website for spring migration bird hikes!

LYRIC THEATRE

What could be better than the best in opera and show tunes performed magnificently under a fall sky in the Sunken Garden? We can't think of many things more soothing than Lyric Under the Stars!



WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2023

MCCRAW FAMILY VISITOR CENTER

A grand opening is scheduled for March 20 — Robert Allerton's birthday! Thanks to the McCraw family for investing in this welcome addition to Allerton!

WANDERING WOODS

Work has begun on the first fully-accessible paved woodland trail, which will have a trailhead at the Main Parking Lot.

MORE LODGING

We are expanding opportunities for the public to stay in the Allerton Mansion and other park properties! Those include special 'staycations', opportunities to lodge after concerts and more!

RIVER BLUFF TRAIL

A NEW trail will connect Allerton with the Hannon Levee Trail in Monticello! Stay tuned...

NEW EVENTS

So many new offerings come your way in 2023! Look for more consistent programming, our new Supper Club and adult summer camp!

STUDIO RENOVATION

Next to the Ice House, a former maintenance shop is being renovated into studio space for programming and visiting artists!

HOLIDAYS 2023

Save the dates for Holiday Showcase (Dec. 1-3), Sweets with Santa (Dec. 17), Holiday GLOW (opens Dec. 1) and more!



There was plenty of work to do in transforming office space into the McCraw Family Visitor Center. This photo was taken during renovations done last May.



BACK IN FULL SWING

JORDAN ZECH, RETREAT CENTER MANAGER

For the past several years, Allerton has been full of events, programs, and various public outreach opportunities. Just as all businesses were affected by the impacts of COVID, it was no different for our sales, public events, and staffing. We took time to restructure a bit and are now fully-staffed with an incredible team who worked extremely hard over the past year.

Our 2022 finally felt like a “normal” year of sales and events. Weddings were back in full-swing. Corporate groups held day meetings, overnight retreats, and week-long sessions. We had a six-month stretch with events and/or programs almost every day of the week. Our staff saw familiar faces that have been utilizing the Mansion for years, as well as new visitors who got to experience Allerton for the first time.

In addition to clients returning, we also had a more normal year of our own public events. Seasonal favorites like the Concert Series, Youth Summer Camps, An Evening with

Poe, Holiday Affair, and Sweets with Santa returned after a brief hiatus. Along with continuing annual events Holiday GLOW, Cultivate Women’s Retreat, and Lyric Under the Stars.

Throughout the year, we also took a lot of time to learn, strategize, and plan for 2023. This year, you will see Allerton become even more accessible to the public. We will be hosting new events and programs (e.g., partnering with area chefs for a Supper Club Series; Adult Summer Camp), as well as expanding existing events (e.g., concert lodging options including brunch and hikes/yoga). Overall, we are creating more opportunities to entice you to get out to Allerton! We hope to see you for another fun year in 2023!

YOU CAN REACH JORDAN AT:

jmgiffor@illinois.edu



STUDIO-STYLE APARTMENT LODGING: Renovation of the Ice House into a studio-style apartment was completed in 2022, thanks to a gift from Dana Brehm and Larry Baumann. The space, used by artists-in-residence but also available to the public as a lodging option, includes a kitchenette, two queen beds, and is equipped with a chair lift and roll-in shower for accessibility.



FRESH FU DOGS ON THE WAY: Thanks to a \$1 million gift from Debra and David Rathje that will endow and support the Fu Dog Garden, four new statues have been commissioned and will be complete this year. Pictured here is a fu dog being manufactured by Colin Dyck of Mudslide Stoneware in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The new statues will be used throughout the park, including in the Fu Dog Garden when statues are being repaired.



HEAT WAVE! NEW BOILER

RICHARD BURTON, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PARK OPERATIONS

Nothing lasts forever, but the gas-fired boiler in the Allerton Greenhouse basement tried its best.

The equipment had been in service since the beginning of the 1950s, heating the original Visitor Center and greenhouse. Late last spring it was determined that it had met the end of its useful life. We have been offsetting the terrible efficiency of the boiler for the past 10 years by using our wood-burning boilers to provide most of the heat load and relying on the gas-fired boiler for supplemental heating only.

With the development of the Artisan Village across the street and the upcoming relocation of the wood-burning boilers, now was the time to upgrade the heating system for the future.

With the help of the University of Illinois Facilities and Services Department and some deferred maintenance funds, a plan was made, and demolition and construction began in June of 2022. Demolition of the old cast iron boiler was no simple task, especially since the boiler had to be taken out in sections through an access hole in the middle of the Greenhouse Café seating area.

The new boiler system consists of two modulating gas-fired high-efficiency boilers. They will operate together at a low rate, but one of the boilers is still sized to meet the entire demand should a failure occur with one of the boilers. This will give Allerton a long service life along with peace of mind during the heating season, with a safe, reliable, and new efficient heating system.





PAVED BIKE TRAIL NEXT

MICAH PUTMAN, FACILITIES SUPERVISOR

Our grounds crew recently started work on a brand-new recreational opportunity – a multi-use path! Up to this point, bicycling has not been allowed on hiking trails because of the damage tires can cause to the dirt paths and the erosion that follows. It is also a safety concern as the paths are muddy and narrow in places, designed for walking only.

The addition of a multi-use path through the woods on the north side of Old Timber Road will provide an opportunity to explore the amazing natural beauty of Allerton we all love, while riding bikes!

The path will be kept wide for bikers and walkers alike to pass safely and will be a hard surface to allow all types of bicycles to glide freely without damaging the park's natural resources.

The work to clear a new path from near the Centaur Parking Lot to the Sun Singer began in January, and will be completed in phases over several years, with a focus on creating as little impact on the natural areas as possible. Our crews began by removing

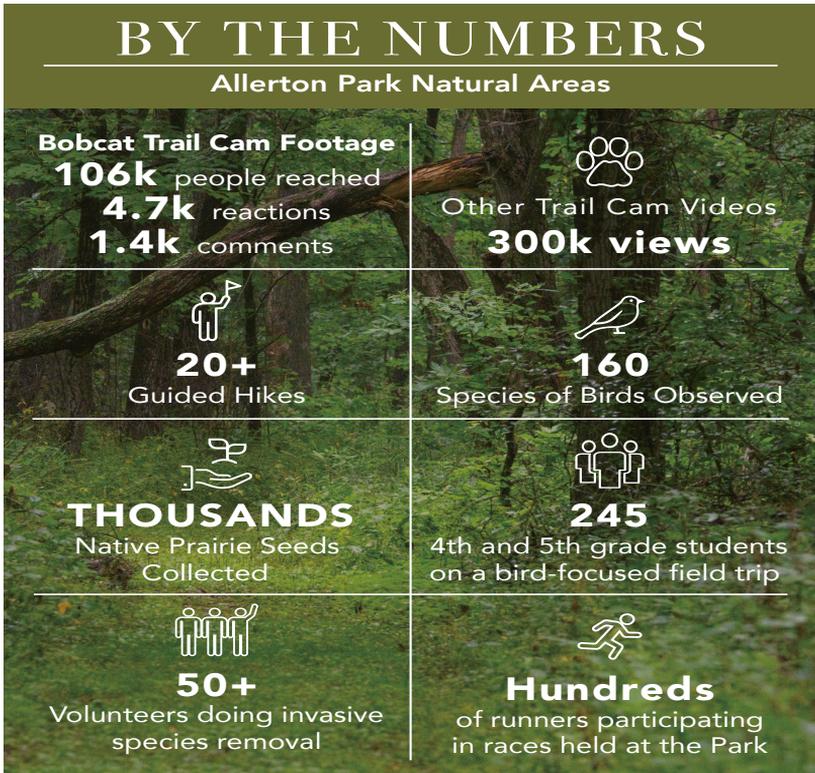
invasive underbrush and a few dead or dying trees in the way of the path. A forestry mower will follow, clearing more invasive species and improving the quality of the woods along the path.

This first phase is part of a larger plan (established in 2014) that will eventually connect the North Entrance of the park with the Sun Singer. When complete, visitors will be able to ride from County Farm Road to the Sun Singer without being on any of the park's roads, creating better and safer accessibility to Allerton.

Additional phases will be completed as fundraising allows. Please see page 21 for more information on giving to help this recreational opportunity come to life!

YOU CAN REACH MICAH AT:

mputman@illinois.edu



A HUB FOR RESEARCH

NATE BECCUE, NATURAL AREAS MANAGER

Last fall, researchers from the University of Illinois and Illinois Natural History Survey spent five nights at Allerton catching migrating Northern Saw-whet Owls. These small owls, weighing about as much as an American Robin, were attracted by playing recordings of their species over a speaker. Light-weight, hard-to-see mist nets were used to capture the owls, which were then weighed, measured, aged, sexed, fitted with a federal bird band before being released.

A total of 13 owls were caught. Most were young and unbanded, but one was a recapture of an owl that was originally caught and banded in Eastern Pennsylvania in October 2021.

The effort at Allerton is part of ongoing research that includes work in Champaign and Vermilion Counties. Although the Northern Saw-whet Owl is one of the most common owls across southern Canada and the northern United States, much is unknown about its populations, distribution and movements, behavior, and breeding biology. Research will continue during migrating season in the fall of 2023.



Nate Beccue with a Northern Saw-whet Owl found during a research effort at Allerton.



The Joe Noecker family (Joe is pictured third from the right), is seen here at Allerton Park's House in the Woods, where Joe's aunt Marilyn Sago (fourth from right) lived in the 1940s. The family has donated towards the renovation of Room 1 of the house, which is now part of the lodging options at Allerton.

FAMILY WITH HISTORY AT ALLERTON INVESTS IN FUTURE

When Joe Noecker was a kid living in Monticello, playing at Allerton Park was just a part of growing up. But it wasn't until adulthood that he found how strong the ties were between the Noeckers and Allerton Park. His grandparents — Ray and Vera Noecker — lived in the House In the Woods and were caretakers at the Allerton estate. His parents also lived in the home for a year after they were married.

In the 1940s, aunts Marilyn Sago and Carolyn JoAnn Shafer grew up in the two-story brick home that went up in 1917, about 17 years after the Allerton Mansion. They also worked on the estate for many years.

So Noecker decided it would be good to give

back and made a donation that will help in the restoration of Room 1 at The House in the Woods, one of its seven bedrooms.

"It meant a lot to the Noecker side of my family," Joe Noecker said of the stately home. "This is a great cause to give to. Allerton wins, my family wins, and the University of Illinois wins. It just feels like a really good fit.

An open house to celebrate the gift was held at the House in the Woods on Nov. 11. Among those attending was Sago, who said that, despite no electricity in the home when she lived there, "it was home."

We thank the Noecker family for helping us maintain this majestic, historic building at Allerton!



FOR THE BETTER

BRIDGET FRERICHS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

This February will mark one decade since I began fundraising for Allerton. As it is so often in life - so much has changed, yet so much remains the same. Looking back to that time, I remember my coworker Derek Peterson (then Associate Director of Park Operations; now Executive Director) consistently reminding me that our “ask” should be for donations to not only maintain Allerton – but to improve it.

Growing up in Monticello and being a life-long Allerton lover, this idea took some getting used to. In my mind, Allerton was already amazing! There was so much to do, so much to love, so much that could remain the same. But, eventually I came to see the possibilities of what could be, of how we could improve, of what needed to change.

In 2014, we completed a Master Plan for the Park, just in time to begin the silent phase of our “ALL IN for Allerton” fundraising campaign. Over the next 8 years we solidified and publicized the projects and ideas laid out in the Master Plan.

We implemented new events and programs, inviting people to experience Allerton for the first time, or in a new way. We renovated century-old facilities, ensuring they would continue to serve not only our needs, but those of future generations.

In the first fiscal year of the campaign (July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015), Allerton received \$280,908 in cash and commitments. By the end of the campaign - fiscal year 2022 - that number was up to \$3.1M.

WE — a community of staff, donors, volunteers, and visitors — committed to the idea that, amazing as it was, Allerton could be even better. We went ALL IN.

The total \$8.9M raised funded hundreds of projects impacting all areas of the park. Friends of Allerton supported formal garden upgrades, trail and natural area preservation, mansion improvements, the installation of a grand entrance, renovations of historic buildings, improved accessibility, sculpture restoration, educational programs and recreational events, and more. For a complete list of projects, and associated donors, please scan the QR below.

Our combined efforts mark the most successful fundraising period in the 76 years since Allerton became a public entity. And with that funding came more improvements than ever before. Your investments have paid off. You have changed Allerton – for the better.

YOU CAN REACH BRIDGET AT:

bridgetf@illinois.edu

WHAT COMES AFTER ALL IN?

Fundraising continues for the Artisan Village, the Wandering Woods Natural Play Area, a new multi-use trail, Mansion restoration, programming, and more! Learn more at Allerton.illinois.edu/donate-to-allerton/ or contact Bridget at bridgetf@illinois.edu.



For a complete list of projects funded by the ALL IN for Allerton campaign, scan this QR code.

NOTEWORTHY NUMBERS

ALL IN for Allerton



\$8,948,151
Total Dollars Raised



3,333
Campaign Donors



\$1,135,826
Biggest Single Gift



6,371
Campaign Gifts



4,600
Gifts Between \$1 and \$100



894
First Time Donors



\$4,862,671
Current Use Dollars Raised



40 / 5
Donor States / Countries

Helping wrap up the ALL IN campaign was a gift from Sangamon County resident **David Taylor**, who has pledged \$1.1 million of his estate for upkeep of the mansion and natural areas, as well as ongoing care of the “Gorilla Carrying Off a Stone Age Woman” statue.





VISITOR CENTER TO OPEN

SARAH PUTMAN, VISITOR CENTER COORDINATOR

The Visitor Center at Allerton Park and Retreat Center has been under renovation over the last year, thanks to support from the McCraw family. Originally Robert Allerton's garden shed, the building located across from the Greenhouse Café was renovated into office space in 2005, and is now updated to serve as the Visitor Center, located at 515 Old Timber Road, Monticello.

Designed and fabricated by Taylor Studios of Rantoul, the museum-quality displays in the 1000 square foot Visitor Center cover the history and highlights of the property. I was appointed as Visitor Center Coordinator in August of 2022, and am also a self-proclaimed history buff.

Funding for the renovation, along with an endowment to provide salary support for my position was donated by Tom and Jessica McCraw of Fort Worth, Texas, and their family members. Although Tom and his

brothers, Jim, David, and John, currently live in various other states, the family has been interested in and visiting Allerton ever since growing up in Monticello.

The McCraw Family Visitor Center really embodies the vision of the park, 'to inspire the community to utilize and value nature, history and the arts through accessible and sustainable programming, research, and facilities.' My hope is that visitors will gain a better understanding of who and what Allerton Park is by starting their adventure at the Visitor Center.

The grand opening of the McCraw Family Visitor Center will be held on March 20, 2023, a fitting date as it is Robert Allerton's birthday and the first day of spring!

YOU CAN REACH SARAH AT:

sputman2@illinois.edu



An installer works on a tea house replica that is one of many displays in the McCraw Family Visitor Center, which will officially open on March 20.



Longtime volunteer Ed Bondurant (at right) receives Allerton's first Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award from Director Derek Peterson in 2022.

FU DOG REPAIR MASTER HONORED

Longtime Allerton Park and Retreat Center volunteer Ed Bondurant of Champaign was presented with a Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award at the ALL IN Celebration held on Nov. 3.

Bondurant has volunteered at the park since 1999, just a year after retiring as a Champaign Unit 4 math instructor. His specialty has been restoring the Allerton's ceramic fu dog statues, many of which date back to 1932.

He has worked on most of the 22 fu dogs — some more than once — including some that, in his own words, “Humpty Dumpty condition.” In one case, it took pieces from three statues to get one complete fu dog.

Bondurant said it never gets boring.

“Each one of these is a different challenge. Some of them it's just pieces that are off, some are just the base, some of them are in pieces,” the University of Illinois graduate said.

He also enjoys being at the park.

“There's nothing better. You come out here, it's interesting, it's fun, you meet all these people out here and I continue my relationship with

the University of Illinois, which for my life has been ongoing now for a lot of years, a lot of years.”

He is the first recipient of Allerton's Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award, which will now be given annually.



Fireworks were also part of the ALL IN celebration on Nov. 3.



ARTISTS AND DIVERSITY

OLIVIA BUNTING, SENIOR PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Spring 2022 In-Residence program took a different approach while still adhering to Robert Allerton's passion for art and supporting emerging artists.

In collaboration with the University of Illinois Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (OVCDEI) and a Call-to-Action grant award, Allerton was able to accept five artists into the In-Residence program. This iteration was titled Rooting a Deeper Connection (RDC), and was aimed at strengthening Allerton's connection to artists and naturalists of diverse communities and vice versa.

The goal? To build and foster meaningful collaborations with Black and Latinx artists to highlight and celebrate art and research within these communities. Through the ongoing RDC, Allerton will engage more deeply with visitors, guests and stakeholders within these communities. This program is one of the many steps Allerton will be taking to strengthen its connection to the whole community it serves.

Thanks to this focus, Allerton hosted the following artists last spring:

- Artist and educator Simiya Sudduth of St. Louis, Missouri
- Guitarist and songwriter José Gobbo, a native of Brazil and now a resident of Springfield
- Barber, a Midwest-based artist and painter
- Dr. Nicole Anderson-Cobb and Latrelle Bright, historians, researchers and playwrights

All residencies included an outreach component where residents engaged with

the community by planning and executing a public event to showcase what they were working on while at the park. Those ranged from interactions with a local Boys and Girls Club, discussion at a public event of the Allerton land before it was purchased by Samuel Allerton, concerts and interactive online presentations.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the following for their part in making RDC a reality: Simiya Sudduth, José Gobbo, Barber, Dr. Nicole Anderson-Cobb, Latrell Bright, former Allerton Public Engagement Coordinator Mindy Brand, The Allerton Art-in-the-Park Committee, the University of Illinois Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the U of I Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, and donors Joan and Peter Hood and Dana Brehm and Larry Baumann.

Rooting a Deeper Connection has taken hold with the success of this first round. We look forward to future residencies to continue building the education and outreach of our community as well as bring awareness to and highlight the intersections of art, nature, and activism. Allerton hopes to continue to raise up artists and naturalists of color and provide them a place to explore, gain inspiration, and share their work with new communities.

Allerton is also accepting applications for its first Naturalist-In-Residence through Feb. 28. Go to our website for more information.

YOU CAN REACH OLIVIA AT:

owarren@illinois.edu



Highlights of Rooting a Deeper Connection included (clockwise from below): Dr. Nicole Anderson-Cobb and Latrell Bright share some of their initial findings after researching the pre-Allerton history of the park land; musician José Gobbo entertains in the Greenhouse Café; Barber paints while at Allerton; and Simiya Sudduth paints a mural on a Greenhouse Café wall.



ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS!



Bill Schowalter (second from left) and his children Mary, Katherine and David have made a gift to restore John Gregg Allerton's room (No. 4) in the Mansion. The gift is in memory of Bill's late wife, Jane Gregg Schowalter, who was John's niece. The family is posed here in John's room between two of his original watercolors, which they also donated. Renovations on the room have begun and will be complete later this spring.



Allerton's Shade Garden, between the Maze Garden and the Avenue of the Musicians, was originally developed by the Illinois Prairie Hosta Society in 2006. Since that time, the garden had lost several plants and was less than lush, prompting staff to form a partnership with the Champaign County Master Gardeners in 2019. These talented volunteers developed a renovation plan, ordered plants, and planted the garden in the spring of 2021. In addition to regular maintenance and watering, the group is creating public educational materials for the garden. We are thankful to work with such knowledgeable volunteers, creating a unique space for all to enjoy!



Allerton Executive Director Derek Peterson addresses a crowd that gathered on May 26 to celebrate the renovated Peony Garden. A gift from Deborah and Michael Westjohn (second and third from right) helped wrap up a campaign to renovate the garden, which explodes in color each spring with 50-plus varieties of peonies. Included was the installation of an accessible pathway, thanks to donations from hundreds of Friends of Allerton.



The Peony Garden was also endowed in honor of Bruce Hannon (between the Westjohns in this photo), Patricia Hannon and the Committee on Allerton Park, who fought in the 1960s and 70s against a water project that would have flooded about half of Allerton Park.

NEW FACES

SEVERAL STAFF MEMBERS WERE ADDED TO THE ALLERTON TEAM IN 2022!



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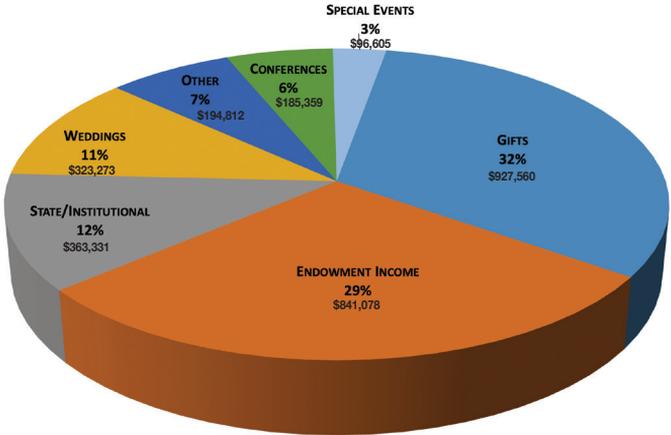
LUCAS RUND

Park Supervisor
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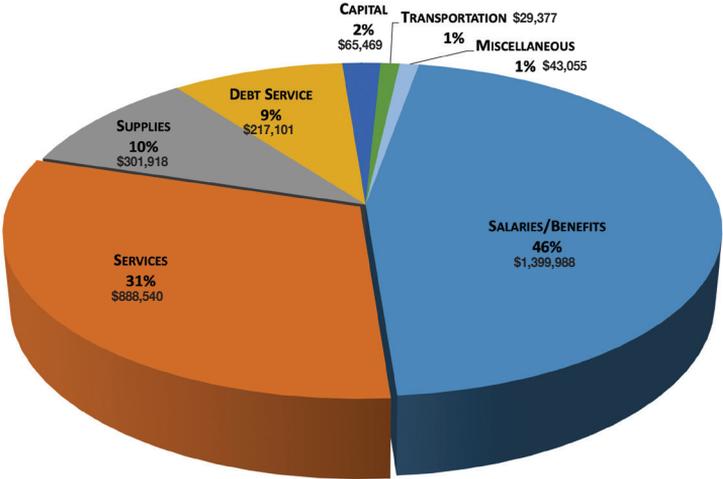
A SNAPSHOT OF ALLERTON'S FY22* FINANCIALS

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, CONTACT
JAN AT JKGILL@ILLINOIS.EDU.

FY22 REVENUE BREAKDOWN



FY22 EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



*FY22: JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022



ALLERTON

PARK & RETREAT CENTER

WON'T YOU JOIN US?

We wouldn't be where we are without the investment of our donors. Join a family of loyal patrons by giving to Allerton Park & Retreat Center today!

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P.O. Box 734500, Chicago, IL 60673-4500

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bridgetf@illinois.edu or 217-333-3287.

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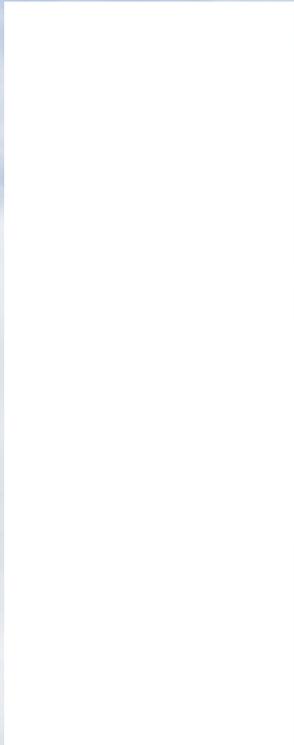
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