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*Executive Director*

Huse Kivrak  
*Director of Education*

#### EDUCATORS

Natassia Balek  
Frank DiGiovanni

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# Presidents Message

## “No Mud, No Lotus” by Hildur Pálsdóttir, Ph.D.

It's been a transformative year at the Science Museum of Long Island. It feels true that you don't know your potential until you're met with obstacles that highlight your abilities to rise to the occasion.

It's been a year of tremendous growth and learning. We can truly say that obstacles became opportunities at the SMLI this year. Our last Membership Meeting was virtual because of pandemic restrictions to gather in person. It is truly remarkable to reflect on a year of growth that not just resulted in a flourishing five-fold membership increase, but also yielded a successful fundraising effort to support our cutting edge, but most importantly, down-to-earth nature-based STEM education.

Thankfully, as a board we got organized into subcommittees with clear vision just in time for the Covid-19 pandemic. The board is rooted in a clear, collective intent to embrace regeneration and environmental education as a significant part of our curriculum. We are actively involved in ecosystem restoration projects on site, most notably supported by a sizable LISFF grant to implement natural solutions for stormwater management.

The greatest achievement this year includes the hiring of our Executive Director Kristen Laird, who's skillfully navigated through these troubled times with unmatched optimism, professionalism and creativity. Our wonderful educators, Natassia Balek and Frank DiGiovanni, deserve a special applause for being resourceful and resilient and our recently appointed Director of Education, Huse Kivrak, is thankfully not just a phenomenal science educator, but also a magician, so yes, we've got what it takes in terms of talent.

We aim to be sustainable and regenerative, encouraging our students to become stewards of the environment. We foster healthy relationships with each other and Earth. Science offers the solutions we need to meet changing climate conditions, imagination holds the keys to a world of wonder.

We need to think outside the box to re-discover how to live in harmony on Earth. And at SMLI we are certainly outside every day with our students in fresh air, project-based learning in nature that's unspoiled and unmatched for this region - with access to beach, pond and woodlands.

We have successfully cultivated relationships with local grassroots organizations, such as Transition Town Port Washington who last September launched a community compost pilot on site. This regenerative effort to reduce emissions and create soil from food scraps has successfully doubled in membership since then and even attracted our New York State Assemblywoman Gina Sillitti who is now a proud member of the compost community.

In the spirit of turning waste into wonder, we are now getting ready to feed the ground of our vegetable gardens with soil amendment made on site. In collaboration with Rewild Long Island, Plant-a-row for the hungry and Mosaic we've harvested thousands of pounds of vegetables donated to our local food pantry in an effort that expresses our intent to support a compassionate and caring community.

At SMLI we didn't just survive a crisis - we learned to thrive. You may have heard that without mud, lotus will not bloom. Well, it got muddy for sure and yes we did flourish.

Our ongoing outreach efforts and care for community relations were celebrated in the successful outdoor concert series, Live at Five, that brought neighbors and friends together in a new way after a traumatic year of physical separation. It felt meaningful to celebrate community in that way and it is with deep gratitude that I reflect on the outpouring of support in launching this series and the resulting successful fundraiser that helps us meet this moment of growth at the SMLI.

While an asteroid may have caused the changed climate conditions that led to dinosaur extinction, human made habitat destruction is to blame for this current climate and extinction crisis.



1526 N Plandome Road  
Manhasset, NY 11030  
Info@sml.org  
[www.sml.org](http://www.sml.org)

Here at the Science Museum, we support natural solutions to adapt to and mitigate climate change, especially as it relates to curing both the climate and biodiversity crisis with re-establishing healthy relationships with land and waterways.

Entomologist and Author of Nature's Best Hope Douglas Tallamy, the inspiration for Homegrown National Parks, stresses the importance for all natural surfaces to serve these four solutions to the climate & biodiversity crisis:

1. Land- and seascapes must capture carbon.
2. Function of natural watersheds and wetlands must be restored.
3. Pollinators must be supported.
4. Nature's complex food web must be resurrected.

We are proud to be part of the climate solution right here at SMLI, fulfilling all of these four vital functions with our actions. Ecosystem restoration is at the heart of our activities, and we are excited to educate future generations in stewardship and conservation, removal of invasive species and planting of natives.

In the spirit of resilience and regeneration, it is my true privilege and honor to continue to serve the community as the President of the Board of Trustees at SMLI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hildur Pálsdóttir".

Dr. Hildur Pálsdóttir  
President, Board of Trustees  
Science Museum of Long Island