



THE ERIC CARLE MUSEUM OF PICTURE BOOK ART

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2026 | July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Fiscal Year 2026 was a year of opportunity and vision building. The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art launched the first phase of its new strategic plan, advancing a bold vision to further elevate picture book art. Guided by four strategic priorities, we are expanding scholarship; increasing our visibility so that more families, educators, artists, and scholars can engage with our work; deepening our connections with communities; and growing the circle of supporters whose generosity makes our mission possible.

As we look to the future, we also pause to recognize the extraordinary leadership of our outgoing Board Chair William Gorth. For more than two decades as a trustee, and through his exceptional service as Board Chair, Bill has helped shape The Carle into the internationally respected institution it is today. His commitment to elevating picture book art, thoughtful stewardship, and steadfast belief in our mission have left an enduring mark on the Museum. We thank Bill for his wisdom, generosity, and dedication. We are profoundly grateful for his leadership and look forward to building on the strong foundation he helped create.

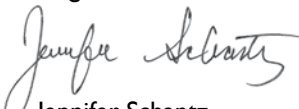
As we celebrate Bill's remarkable legacy, we also look ahead with great optimism and enthusiasm as Dr. Claudette S. McLinn joins as The Carle's new Board Chair. The Founder and Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature, Claudette has devoted her entire career to championing children's literature, advancing literacy, and ensuring that every child has access to stories that reflect and inspire them.

This past year was a fruitful one. We surpassed the \$500,000 Challenge grant from The Eric & Barbara Carle Foundation, with new or increased gifts over the last fiscal year bringing more than \$1,000,000 to the Museum. And our 2025 Carle Honors set a record with \$400,000 raised! None of what we have accomplished this year and what we hope to achieve in the years ahead would be possible without you. Your generosity, enthusiasm, and belief in the power of picture book art fuels every exhibition we create, every work of art we preserve, every family we welcome, and every child whose imagination is sparked within our walls.

As we embark on this exciting year ahead, we do so with confidence because of the remarkable community that stands beside us. Together, we will continue to elevate picture book art; inspire new generations of readers, artists, and storytellers; and ensure that this extraordinary art form continues to enrich lives for generations to come.

Thank you for your partnership, your philanthropy, and your unwavering support of The Carle. We are honored to have you with us as we launch the Museum's next chapter filled with imagination, creativity, discovery, and joy.

With gratitude,


Jennifer Schantz
Executive Director

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art was co-founded by Eric and Barbara Carle in 2002 to celebrate and elevate the art of the picture book. We collect, preserve, and exhibit original picture book art and encourage visitors of all ages to appreciate and foster the love of picture book art.

Situated on 7.5 acres in Amherst, Massachusetts, The Carle houses a rich and deep collection of art and illuminates its collection through exhibitions, education, programming, and art creation—making it a critical resource for picture book artists and authors, and art-loving communities locally, nationally, and abroad. Since opening its doors 24 years ago, The Carle has welcomed more than one million visitors—plus more than four million additional museumgoers who have enjoyed its traveling exhibitions around the world.

Upgrades to Our Auditorium and Marketing Platforms!

In Fiscal Year 2026, The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art received a Destination Development Capital grant of \$190,000 from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism for interior upgrades to our auditorium that allow for live streaming, a new digital platform for The Carle Bookshop, and enhanced marketing tools to encourage increased visitation to the Pioneer Valley. We are so grateful to Representative Mindy Domb and State Senator Jo Comerford for their support of our work and mission.

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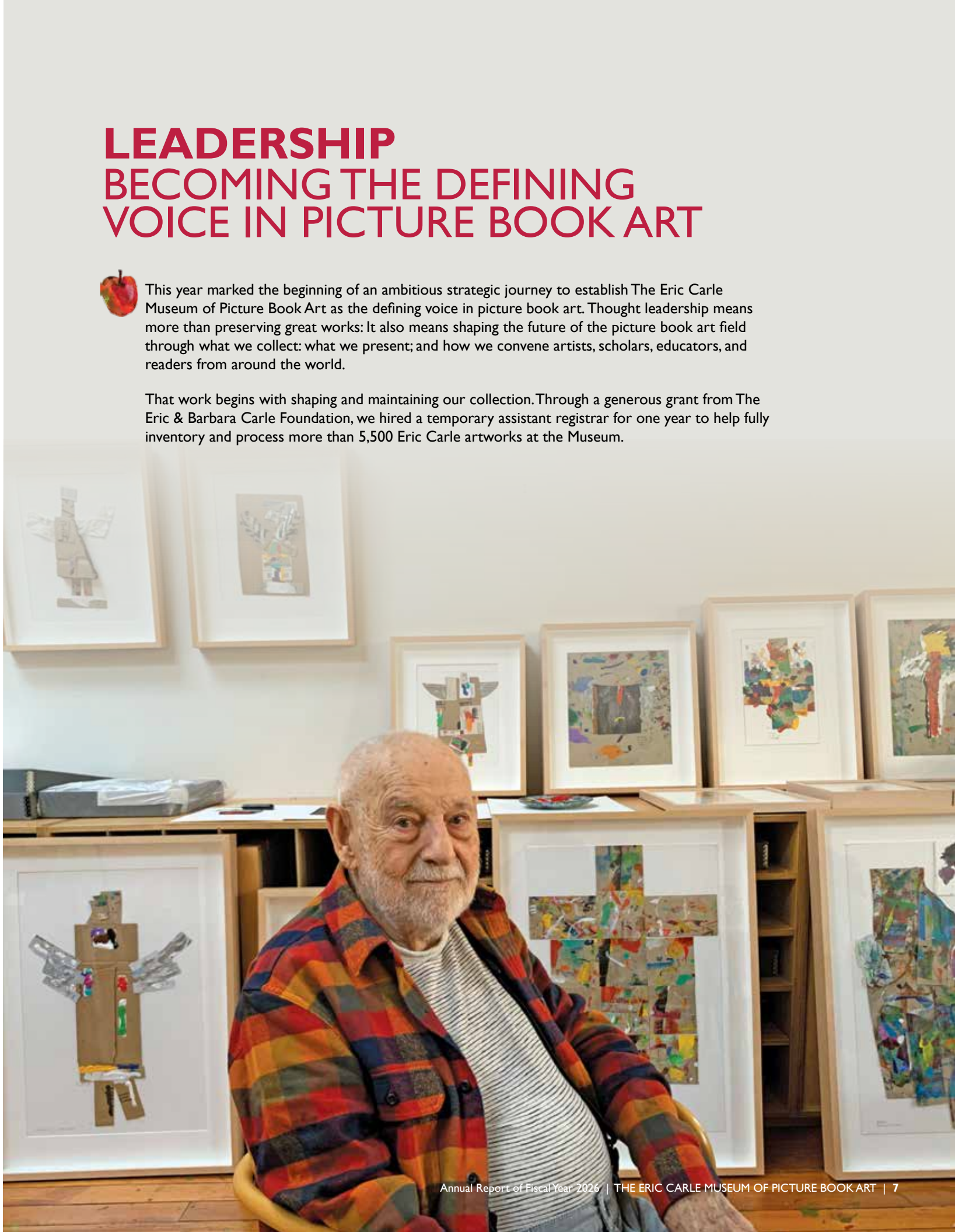
VISION
ELEVATING PICTURE BOOK
ART AND ARTISTS
WORLDWIDE



LEADERSHIP
BECOMING THE DEFINING
VOICE IN PICTURE BOOK ART

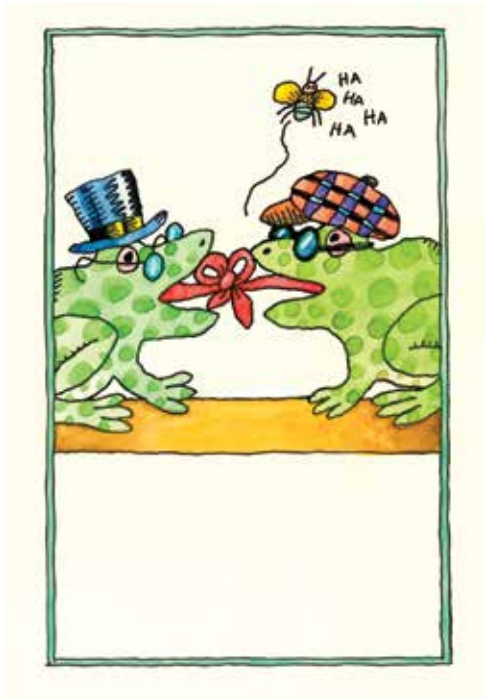
 This year marked the beginning of an ambitious strategic journey to establish The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art as the defining voice in picture book art. Thought leadership means more than preserving great works: It also means shaping the future of the picture book art field through what we collect; what we present; and how we convene artists, scholars, educators, and readers from around the world.

That work begins with shaping and maintaining our collection. Through a generous grant from The Eric & Barbara Carle Foundation, we hired a temporary assistant registrar for one year to help fully inventory and process more than 5,500 Eric Carle artworks at the Museum.



New Acquisitions

This year, we also strengthened The Carle’s holdings with significant acquisitions by adding 300 works of art to our collection, including art from Zoey Abbott, Marc Brown, Nancy Ekholm Burkert, Bonnie Christensen, Annette Compton, Wesley Dennis, Tony DiTerlizzi, Juliet Kepes, Sean Kernan, Leo Lionni, LeUyen Pham, Maurice Sendak, Sally Sweetland, Simms Taback, Phoebe Wahl, Ed Young, Wade Zahares, and others. Together, these artworks enrich our collection with a broader range of artistic voices, cultural perspectives, and storytelling traditions, ensuring that future generations encounter a more inclusive and expansive history of picture book art.



Leo Lionni, Book dummy for *Little Blue and Little Yellow: A Story for Pippo and Ann and Other Children* (Penguin Random House). Gift of the family of Frances S. Foster, Leo Lionni's friend and longtime editor. © 1959, 1987 Leo Lionni.

Phoebe Wahl, Illustration for *Little Witch Hazel: A Year in the Forest* (Tundra Books). Gift of the artist. © 2021 Phoebe Wahl.

Simms Taback, Illustration for *Buggy Riddles* by Katy Hally and Lisa Eisenberg (Puffin Books). Donated by the family of Simms Taback to Carle Honors. © 1993 Simms Taback.

Marc Brown, Illustration for *Arthur's Family Vacation* (Little, Brown Books for Young Readers). Gift of the artist. © 1993 Marc Brown.

Juliet Kepes, Illustration for *Five Little Monkeys* (Houghton Mifflin). Gift of the Estate of Juliet Kepes. © 1952 Juliet Kepes.



Featured Artists

Our commitment to artists extends well beyond the collection. Throughout the year, we welcomed celebrated creators including Talia Aikens-Nuñez, Selena Alko, R.W. Alley, Jason Chin, Britt Crow-Miller, Maddie Frost, Robin Preiss Glasser, E.B. Goodale, Beth Krommes, Wunneanatsu Lamb-Cason, Grace Lin, Megin Litwin, Elizabeth James Perry, Gillian Reed, Scott Rothman, Esme Shapiro, Astrid Sheckels, Charles R. Smith Jr., Lauren Stohler, Melissa Sweet, Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, and Phoebe Wahl, while laying the groundwork for expanded artist and scholar residencies, international exchanges, publications, digital scholarship, and an international symposium. By investing in the people who create, study, and teach picture book art, The Carle is becoming a global center for creativity, innovation, and scholarly dialogue.

Art Bridges Illustrators Cohort

We were invited by Art Bridges to join a cohort of museums that have significant collections of illustrations, including the Delaware Art Museum, the Brandywine Art Museum, the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum of Ohio State University Libraries, Norman Rockwell Museum, and the New Britain Museum of Art. The cohort will work together with Art Bridges' generous support to develop a loan program and joint exhibition.



Charles R. Smith Jr.

Scholarship & Education

At home in Amherst, we continued to advance scholarship through professional development for educators, partnerships with universities and cultural institutions, scholarly lectures, and innovative teaching practices that encourage reading with children rather than to them. Our educators welcomed scores of students and teachers to the Museum, helping them develop creative confidence while demonstrating the remarkable ways picture books can enrich learning across disciplines.

Through initiatives such as the Picture Book Art Ambassadors Lab, our annual Barbara Elleman Research Library Lecture, and collaborations with institutions including Simmons University, we are cultivating a growing network of scholars, educators, and advocates who recognize picture books as a powerful gateway to art, literature, history, science, and human understanding.

Together, these efforts are transforming The Carle into more than a museum. They are positioning it as the world’s leading center for picture book art—a place where the field is preserved, studied, celebrated, and continually reimagined for generations to come.

Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation Grant
The Carle is deeply grateful to The Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation for supporting its Picture Book Ambassadors Lab, a transformative literacy partnership. This train-the-trainer model assisted 20 Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) organizations in using picture books and interactive reading practices to encourage effective early literacy practices among the families they serve.



Exhibitions at the Museum

Our exhibitions continue to reveal the extraordinary depth and complexity of picture book art while reaching audiences far beyond Amherst.



Soul, Sound & Voice: The Art of Jerry Pinkney
June 20, 2026 - January 3, 2027



Under the Cork Tree: The Story of Ferdinand
May 9 - November 8, 2026



Cooking with Eric Carle
September 20, 2025 - September 6, 2026



Entwined Memory: Indigenous Stories of Creation, Place, and Continuity
August 8, 2025 - August 15, 2026



CLICK! Photographers Make Picture Books
January 17 - June 7, 2026



Sprites, Spells, and Splashes: Magical Beings in Picture Book Art
November 22, 2025 - April 26, 2026

Image credits on inside of back cover

REACH

RAISING AWARENESS OF PICTURE BOOK ART ACROSS THE GLOBE



Traveling Exhibitions

This year marked a milestone in The Carle's commitment to bringing picture book art to audiences around the world. Through our traveling exhibition program, we shared the Museum's collection with thousands of visitors while generating more than \$250,000 in earned revenue. Exhibitions at the Michener Art Museum in Pennsylvania and the Minnesota Museum of American Art introduced new audiences to the richness and artistry of picture books; while through an ambitious international collaboration, we traveled a retrospective exhibition of Eric Carle's work to Tokyo, Japan.

On April 24, *Eric Carle: Art, Books, and the Caterpillar* opened at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo in a spectacular presentation spanning two floors and six expansive galleries. Organized into four thematic sections exploring Eric Carle's beloved books, artistic life, innovative design, and personal story, the exhibition welcomed more than 3,000 visitors on opening day alone. Public enthusiasm was extraordinary, with 10,000 exhibition catalogues sold in the first two weeks. The opening celebration was especially meaningful as it reunited many of Eric Carle's longtime friends and collaborators, including founding trustee Takeshi Matsumoto of the Chihiro Art Museum Azumino, whose family's vision for celebrating picture book art inspired Eric and Barbara Carle to cofound their own museum—the first of its kind in the United States—more than two decades ago.

The exhibition also strengthened relationships that will shape The Carle's future as an international leader in the field of picture book art. During the visit, Museum staff engaged with colleagues at the Chihiro Art Museum, Itabashi Art Museum, and Kaisei-sha—the pioneering Japanese publisher that helped bring *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to life through its innovative printing and binding techniques. Conversations also led to new collaborations, including an upcoming exchange with the Chihiro Art Museum and partnerships that will expand an educational and cultural programming exchange between Japan and Amherst.





Beyond the exhibition itself, the trip reaffirmed the enduring global impact of Eric Carle's work and the Museum that bears his name. Visits with Japanese artists, publishers, educators, tourism leaders, and students highlighted the universal language of picture books and the powerful connections they create across cultures. Whether meeting sixth-grade students in Kyoto inspired by Eric Carle's books or exploring new opportunities to welcome Japanese visitors to Amherst, every encounter reinforced The Carle's role as an international ambassador for picture book art and our commitment to ensuring that these stories continue to inspire readers around the world.

Digital Offerings

Our reach extended beyond physical activities to digital storytelling as well. This year, we launched a partnership with KidLit TV—one of the leading online platforms dedicated to children's literature—to produce original video content highlighting The Carle's exhibitions, artists, educators, and collections. By sharing our expertise with audiences far beyond those who can visit in person, this collaboration is introducing new families, teachers, librarians, and picture book enthusiasts around the world to the Museum and to the remarkable art form we champion.



New!! Check Out the New Online Carle Bookshop.

Our Bookshop has a new, beautiful digital home! Built on Shopify, the redesigned store offers a fresh, easy-to-navigate shopping experience filled with thoughtfully curated picture books, gifts, educational resources, and exclusive Carle merchandise. Whether you're searching for the perfect book, a unique gift, or a keepsake inspired by your favorite picture book artists, it's never been easier to bring a little piece of The Carle home with you.



“A book you can play with, a toy you can read...”

—Eric Carle

Whether through traveling exhibitions, international partnerships, our new online store, or digital collaborations, The Carle is reaching audiences on an unprecedented scale. These efforts reaffirm our commitment to serving as a global ambassador for picture book art, sharing stories that transcend borders, fostering cross-cultural connections, and inspiring people of all ages to discover the creativity, beauty, and enduring power of picture book art.

COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE JOY OF PICTURE BOOKS

At The Carle, we believe that museums are more than places to view art. They are places where people gather, connect, and create lasting memories. This year, we continued to strengthen our role as a vibrant community hub by offering new opportunities for people of all ages to experience picture book art in welcoming, unexpected, and joyful ways.

Family reading and art programs engaged young and young-at-heart audiences. Visitors of all ages cherished Everyday Art Projects, Word Play, Special Storytimes, Story Chasers, Reading Buddies, Read-Aloud, Cook-Along, and Yoga programs. Our Very Hungry Caterpillar Day also drew large audiences.



“Seeing the kids in the art studio gives me hope for the future.”

—Peter Schrauth,
Friends and Family Plus Member



Two major initiatives also exemplified this vision. Sunset Thursdays once again transformed our beautiful building, patio, and Bobbie’s Meadow into one of the region’s favorite summer destinations. Families, friends, and neighbors gathered on warm evenings to experience the Museum after hours, enjoying live music outdoors, creating art inspired by our exhibitions, and picnicking on our beautiful grounds. The series drew record attendance, welcoming new audiences while giving longtime members another reason to return throughout the summer.

During the colder months, Carle After Dark extended that sense of community year-round. This monthly evening series invited adults and families to see the Museum in a fresh way through themed gallery experiences, live performances, hands-on artmaking, conversations with artists, and opportunities to gather over food and drink. Presenting trivia nights, hoe downs, tarot card readings, Dungeon and Dragons games, a fashion runway, and seasonal celebrations with music and creative workshops, Carle After Dark has quickly become a signature program that demonstrates how picture book art can bring people together across generations.



These programs reflect a broader commitment to making The Carle a place where everyone feels welcome. Whether visitors come for an exhibition, a concert, a workshop, or simply to spend time together, they leave having experienced the power of art to foster curiosity, creativity, and connection. As we continue to expand community partnerships and develop new opportunities for engagement, we are creating a Museum that is not only a destination for picture book art, but also a gathering place where imagination flourishes and communities grow stronger.

SUPPORT GROWING OUR FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS



Everything we accomplish at The Carle is made possible by you, our community of donors, members, trustees, foundations, corporate partners, and volunteers who believe in the transformative power of picture books. This year, that community grew stronger than ever, providing the resources needed to advance our mission and launch the first year of our strategic plan.



We are especially grateful to The Eric & Barbara Carle Foundation for its extraordinary leadership in establishing a \$500,000 Challenge Grant to inspire new and increased philanthropic support. We are thrilled to share that our supporters rose to the occasion, enabling The Carle to successfully meet and exceed the full match, generating more than \$1,000,000 to support The Carle. This remarkable achievement reflects both the generosity of our longtime supporters and the enthusiasm of many new friends who have joined our growing family of donors. Their collective investment strengthens the Museum today while helping secure its future for generations to come.

Our annual Carle Honors celebration also reached a new milestone, generating more than \$400,000—the most successful fundraiser in the Museum's history. The evening brought together artists, authors, publishers, educators, collectors, trustees, and philanthropists to celebrate the extraordinary individuals and organizations whose work has shaped the world of picture books. Beyond its fundraising success, the event reflected the expanding community of people who share our belief that picture book art deserves to be celebrated, studied, and preserved.



Carle Honors Honorees

Artist: George Ford

Angel: Cooperative Children's Book Center, represented by Tessa Michaelson Schmidt

Mentor: Andrea Davis Pinkney

Bridge: Seattle Children's Theatre, represented by Linda Hartzell

Inspiration Award: Jane Bayard Curley

Individual Support



In Fiscal Year 2026, we hosted six exhibition opening events for our members along with panel discussions of featured artists, photographers, authors, curators, and scholars, including Isabel Ruiz Cano, Nina Crews, Jane Bayard Curley, Tony DiTerlizzi, Saxton Freyman, Susan Kuklin, Gil and Andrew Leaf, Leonard S. Marcus, Rita Marshall, Andrea Davis Pinkney, Brian Pinkney, Shelley Rotner, Esme Shapiro, Charles R. Smith Jr., Saki Tanaka, Walter Wick, and Isabel Ancona on behalf of her father, George Ancona.



Institutional Support



We also have been awarded a number of meaningful grants from private foundations, the State of Massachusetts, and the Federal government. We are grateful to have received a \$190,000 grant from the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, thanks to the support of State Representative Mindy Domb and State Senator Jo Comerford; a \$25,000 grant from Art Bridges to survey visitors and to host a convening of illustration museums; a \$20,000 grant from Mass Humanities to support our upcoming exhibition programming for *The Precious Things We Share: The Past, Present, and Future of Indigenous Picture Book Art*; a \$35,000 grant from the Irene E. and George Davis Foundation to support our Picture Book

Ambassadors Lab; and a \$15,000 grant from the Coby Foundation to support our upcoming exhibition, *Weaving Words: Fiber Arts and Picture Books*.

As The Carle looks ahead, we are inspired by the generosity and commitment of everyone who has chosen to invest in our mission. Together, we are building far more than financial support. We are building a vibrant and enduring community of advocates who believe that picture book art has the power to inspire imagination, spark curiosity, foster empathy, and change lives. We are deeply grateful for your partnership and look forward to the promise and the beauty of the journey ahead.

FINANCE REPORT

Financial Overview

Fiscal Year 2026 was a year of strategic investment and continued growth for The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. The Museum generated approximately \$5.55 million in unrestricted operating revenue, while operating expenses totaled \$5.53 million, allowing The Carle to conclude the year with a balanced operating budget.

Operating Revenue: \$5.5 million

Contributed support remained the Museum's largest source of revenue, totaling \$4.22 million, demonstrating the continued generosity of foundations, corporations, members, donors, and special event supporters. The Carle successfully met The Eric & Barbara Carle Challenge Grant of \$500,000 of new and increased giving in Fiscal Year 2026 over Fiscal Year 2025, which raised a total of \$1,000,000. Earned revenue also continued to grow, reaching \$900,000, fueled by admissions, museum shop sales, traveling exhibitions, and educational programming. An additional \$410,000 endowment draw provided stable operating support.

Operating Expenses: \$5.5 million

On the expense side, The Carle continued investing in its future through expanded marketing, exhibitions, collections, education, technology, and organizational capacity. These investments directly support the Museum's strategic plan to elevate scholarship, broaden audiences, strengthen community engagement, and increase national and international visibility, while maintaining sound financial stewardship.

Endowment: \$13.8 million

We started the year with \$12.5 million in endowment funds. \$250,000 was added to the endowment due to the success of The Eric and Barbara Carle Foundation Challenge Grant. Not including contributions received, our endowment generated an 11 percent investment return, more than 2.5 times the amount of our budgeted 4 percent draw.

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

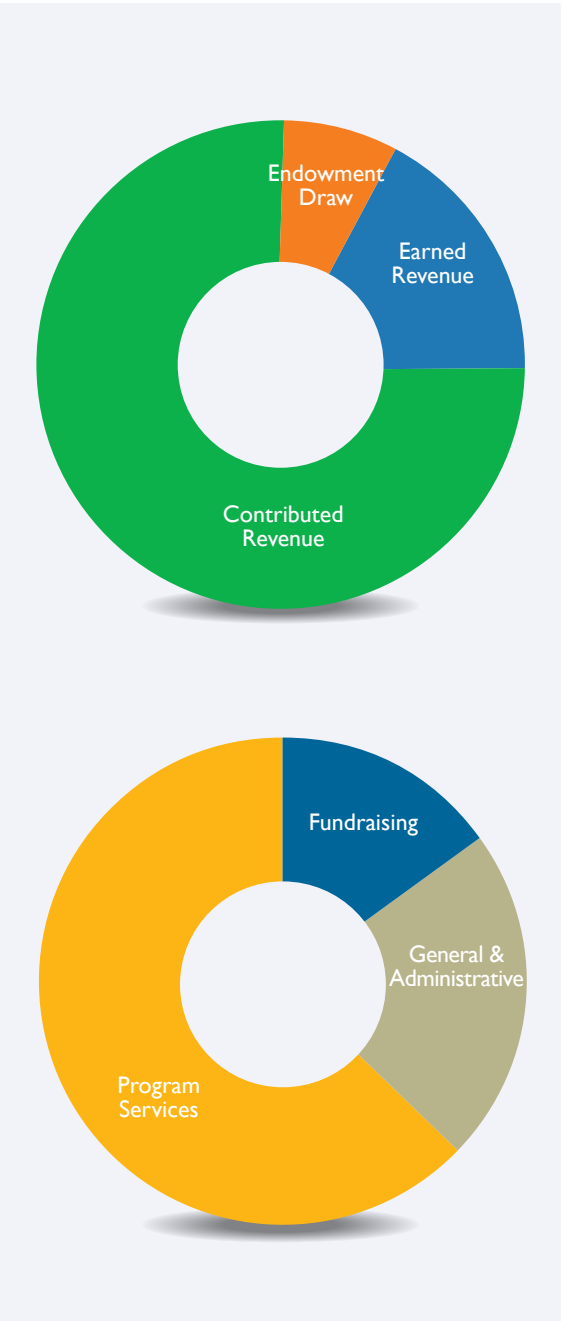
Cash and Cash Equivalents:	\$9.71 million
Investments:	\$13.80 million
Pledges Receivable:	\$3.65 million
Fixed Assets:	\$7.21 million
Other:	\$365,000

Liabilities \$540,000

Net Assets

Without Donor Restriction:	\$20.4 million
With Donor Restriction:	\$5 million

Preliminary, unaudited financial information



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As of September 2026

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A'Knesha Davis-Darkwah, *Per Diem Bookseller*
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Isabelle Ness, *Guest Services Associate*
Susan Norton, *Guest Services Associate*
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Barbara Smith, *Guest Services Associate*

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Eliza Brown, *Retail Manager*

Megan Regan, *Operations Manager*
John Stark, *Facilities Manager*

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Beatrice Agbi, *Alix Zacharias Administration and Leadership Intern*
Mel Cosdon, *Art Studio Intern*
Maire Kettner, *Alix Zacharias Development Intern*
Eleanor Stolzoff, *Special Trinkett Clark Intern*

Interns Summer 2026

Alex Brumer, *Art Studio Intern*
June Dorsch, *Alix Zacharias Development Intern*
Madeleine Scalere, *Alix Zacharias Administration and Leadership Intern*

Work Study 25-26 Academic Year

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July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026
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Bill concluded his service as Board Chair and Trustee in June 2026, leaving a lasting legacy of thoughtful leadership, generosity, and deep commitment to the Museum's mission. We are profoundly grateful for his twenty years of service and for all he has done to help The Carle flourish. While his formal Board service has ended, Bill and his wife Janet remain valued members of The Carle family and enthusiastic supporters of its future.



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“It is very meaningful for me that the Museum has become a home for picture book art from around the world and a place where illustration is celebrated by so many people.”
—Eric Carle



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