The Spirit of Generosity Campaign priorities are focused on enhancing the guest experience, addressing infrastructure, and improving internal efficiencies. An additional priority has been to significantly add to Maymont’s endowment—a permanent invested fund that produces income support for the operating budget.

PROJECTS
One of the first visible changes on the grounds was a comprehensive signage system which added over 50 interpretive and way-finding signs interspersed throughout Maymont’s 100 acres—allowing guests to better orient themselves while they are at Maymont, as well as learn more about its history, architecture, arboretum and gardens.

The Campaign features numerous priorities for the Mansion and Grounds. One of the first was to meet a challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that created a permanent $2 million curatorial endowment. All 94 windows at the Mansion were replaced, and re-installed with specially treated glass that will filter harmful UV rays to better conserve original furniture and textiles. Several donors also stepped forward to fund special projects, replacing draperies and reupholstering whole rooms of original Dooley furniture. In the Japanese Garden, the iconic Moon Bridge was replaced, and the Italian Garden received funding for much needed masonry repair work and the creation of a special support fund for its care.

Nearly $3.6 million was invested at the beloved Farm. In addition to bringing the entire area to ADA compliance, pastures and fencing were reconfigured, and the Barn was stabilized and restored to enhance both the guest experience and animal well-being. Two new state of the art classrooms were built and are busy year-round with Summer Camps, Birthday Parties and School Groups. The Farm parking lot was expanded, and a large Rain Garden/Bioretention pool was installed at its base to provide a natural filter for stormwater and runoff.

Also near the Farm Entrance, Maymont is creating office and community meeting space. A Mediterranean-style house, located at 1000 Westover Road and built in 1918, was purchased in 2012 by the Foundation with the help of two generous donors, and construction is currently underway to convert it to office space. Two wings will be added on each side for staff offices and community meeting rooms. The ground floor and beautifully landscaped exterior spaces including the Reinhart Family Courtyard will be used for weddings, rehearsal dinners, community events and corporate retreats.

The Robins Nature and Visitor Center will undergo a $2.5 million makeover in its exhibit galleries and lobby area. Most of the exhibits date back to the Center’s opening in 1999. New exhibits will continue the focused theme of interpreting the flora and fauna of the James River, and will include a 30-foot-high interpretive climbing structure for an immersive new learning experience.

The Spirit of Generosity Campaign and Endowment Campaign continues to be an opportunity for the community to support Richmond’s most beloved park and one of the Region’s most visited attractions. Visitors from Central Virginia and across the country agree that Maymont is a true gem and an amazing cultural asset.

While the response to Maymont’s appeal for support has been incredibly strong, there is still more work to do, and more opportunity for broader support from those who have yet to give.
An Extraordinary Gift.

To watch our Spirit of Generosity video, please visit https://maymont.org/support/capital-campaign.

OVER $5 MILLION
Mr. and Mrs. Steven A. Markel

$1 MILLION - $4,999,999
Commonwealth Foundations/
Matthew and Kirsti Goodwin
The Robbins Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. E. Claiborne Robbins, Jr.
Estate of Lora M. Robbins

$500,000 - $999,999
Robert G. Cabell III and Maude Morgan
Cabell Foundation
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Christian
The Lipman Foundation
Moses D. Nunnally, Jr. Charitable Trust
Mary Morton Parsons Foundation
Ms. Barbara Thalhimer
Charles G. Thalhimer Charitable Trust
Estate of Mabelle Warner

$250,000 - $499,000
National Endowment for the Humanities
Mr. Myron H. Reinhart
Virginia Department of Transportation

$100,000 - $249,000
Altria Group
Mr. and Mrs. Tiffany B. Armstrong
Beirne Carter Foundation
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Mr. Charles E. Duff
Freeman Family Fund
Mary Anderson Harrison Foundation
Institute of Museum and Library Services
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The Estate of Mr. John W. Lewis
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Barbara A. Peers Trust
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Barbara J. Thalhimer & William B. Thalhimer, Jr.
Family Fund
Windsor Foundation Incorporated

The WMY Fund

$25,000 - $99,000
Libby and Lloyd Ann Charitable Fund
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Dr. and Mrs. Jeff A. Brown
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Mr. and Mrs. Jack H. Spain, Jr.
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Mr. and Mrs. Fred T. Tattersall
Mr. and Mrs. Stanton L. Thalhimer
Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Thompson, Jr.
Virginia Commercial Finance
Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Wiggins, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Greg Williams

$10,000 - $24,999
Mr. Thomas Beals
Margot Yaw Burgwyn Capital One Services, Inc.
Lucile Cole
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Comet, Jr.
The Community Foundation serving Richmond and Central Virginia
Mr. and Mrs. John H. Cronly III
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Mrs. Betty Ann Dillon
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Domson
Estate of Carolyn D. Dunaway
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Mr. and Mrs. Charles L. Reed, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Q. Rhodes
Mr. Bruce Rybarczyk and Mrs. Parke Richeson
Mr. Anthony Markel
Mrs. Chiswell D. L. Perkins
Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Hill
Foundation
The Wilbur Moreland Havens Charitable Foundation
Virginia Environmental Endowment

$50 - $9,999
Over 250 gifts.

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Foundation
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Virginia Environmental Endowment

$50 - $9,999
Over 250 gifts.
The multi-year $2 million Spirit of Generosity signage and technology project has fulfilled the goal to enhance park-wide guest services that help visitors navigate, experience and sustain Maymont during their outings. Results of the initiative include new way-finding, interpretive and welcome signage as well as a new digital donation system.

A signage master plan was developed first to achieve a cohesive presentation across the 100-acre park and estate — a pleasing replacement to the visual clutter of mismatched designs, materials and fonts from previous decades. The appearance, locations and hierarchy of signs were carefully devised to give guests the information they need where they need it while minimizing disruption of Maymont’s scenic vistas.

Comprehensive directional signs were completed in 2015 and now guide visitors along their journey from their arrival to each planned destination and spontaneous adventure. By including distance measurements and steep incline markers, the signs also allow guests to choose their path according to their physical abilities.

The guest experience has been further enhanced with interpretive signage, full of fun facts and fascinating history, which was installed at key points in 2016 and 2017. Visitors can learn about significant trees of the Maymont Arboretum, the treasures they will find inside the Maymont Mansion, the origins of the Maymont Farm, and countless other tidbits to expand their knowledge.

To complete the unified new signage system, three welcome signs were installed at the Maymont Farm in 2018. First-time guests appreciate the overview of Maymont and its history as well as the map with key attractions. Frequent visitors are sure to find something new to do and be motivated to connect on social media. And hopefully everyone will be inspired to donate and sustain Maymont.

After all, who could resist the eye-catching purple donation machines now located at the Farm and the Historic Estate entrances? Installed in 2018, these donation stations have made it possible — for the first time ever — for guests to donate via credit card at locations within Maymont.

Since the machines arrived, Maymont has seen a sizeable increase in contributions at both locations, where before only cash donations could be accepted in a plain metal box. The new units also provide zip code data for Maymont staff to analyze the geographical diversity of its guests and better serve community needs.

The signage and technology initiative has expanded the ways in which guests can experience Maymont, offering deeper connections to the environment, history and the community.
The story of Maymont began with the vision and generosity of its original owners, James and Sallie Dooley, who gave their mansion and 100-acre estate to the people of Richmond. Their legacy inspired the name of the current capital campaign, The Spirit of Generosity, and so it is only fitting that preservation of their former home has been a central priority in funded projects.

One of the first was the successful completion of a Challenge Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The highly competitive NEH award recognizes the Maymont Mansion’s exceptional preservation story and its richly layered interpretation of both upstairs inhabitants and downstairs workforce perspectives. The $1.25 million Dale Cyrus Wheary Mansion Endowment will help to sustain the historic house museum and its collection for generations to come and extend the engaging experience enjoyed annually by nearly 40,000 visitors.

“Maymont: An American Estate”, released in 2015, is the first publication to present the full story of Richmond’s beloved treasure. The lavishly illustrated book was made possible through the generous donation of Nell and Hunter Thompson. Designed and published by Scala Art Publishers, Inc., the eighty-page book was written by Dale Wheary, who served as Maymont Curator and Director of Historical Collections and Programs from 1978 through 2018. The book relates the story of the Dooleys, their estate, the collection, the landscape, and the later additions of Maymont’s ever-popular animal and nature habitats and carriage collection. The book was reprinted in 2016.

Architect George Skarmeas, AIA, Ph.D., principal of Preservation Design Partnership, developed a prioritized Preservation Plan based on a two-year study of the historic structure and its systems. The Preservation Plan, a standard resource for professional historic site management, provides a detailed condition assessment with recommended treatments and priorities for future preservation work and upgrading of essential systems to maintain the Maymont Mansion in stable, museum-quality condition for generations to come. The three-volume report, completed in 2018, will serve as the basis for implementation of an extensive Maymont Mansion architectural restoration project.

Preservation engineer Michael Henry, Oak Grove Window Restoration, conducted a condition survey of all 94 mansion windows and developed a phased treatment plan. Implementation began in 2016 with the support of the Institute for Museum and Library Services. Exterior-mounted laminated panes were fabricated and installed to protect the original window frames and sashes, to reduce damaging UV and visible light transmission, and to reduce air, moisture, particulate, insect infiltration, and energy consumption.

The Campaign also funded important drapery and historic textiles projects aimed to enhance the authenticity of the Gilded Age interiors. Historic textiles expert Natalie Larson directed and coordinated each phase of the drapery projects based on original documents. Most of the luxurious fabrics have been reproduced by Gainsborough Silk Weaving Company in England. In the Swan Room, the Blue Drawing Room, and coordinated each phase of the drapery projects based on original documents. Most of the luxurious fabrics have been reproduced by Gainsborough Silk Weaving Company in England. The twelve silk panels, woven to give the impression of delicately embroidered flowers in blue and raspberry colors with metallic threads. Also in the Blue Drawing Room, the Louis XVI-style Salon of Don Quixote Tapestry Conservation was completed in 2018. Made by the famous Gobelins Manufactory in Paris, it is one of the world-class treasures of Maymont. Depicting a scene from Don Quixote, “Don Quixote Freed of Folly by Wisdom,” the large tapestry was acquired by James Dooley in Paris in 1910 from Duveen Brothers, a leading art dealer of the Gilded Age. Conservation was completed by one of the nation’s foremost textile conservators at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York.
THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY

LIFE IS BETTER ON THE FARM

Friendly farm animals are the big draw at the Maymont Farm, a popular destination for young families and the first memory of Maymont for many guests.

The original barn and pastures were completed in 1960. The farm site then was relocated in 1983 to accommodate larger facilities for the animals in a more accessible location for guests. Maymont was not a farm during the Dooleys’ time, but this well-loved corner of the estate now serves as a hands-on animal sanctuary, community garden, gathering place, and educational facility for hundreds of thousands of Richmonders and tourists alike.

More than two decades after its relocation, the Farm required significant improvements to fortify the structures, enhance the guest experience and improve accessibility and amenities. A $3.2 million dollar renovation began in April 2016 to meet those needs.

After bracing the farm structure, the barn floors and stalls were torn out and replaced with improved animal housing. Guests now can visit, feed and touch their favorite farm animals in the barn year-round. Additionally, new signage was installed within the barn to educate and engage guests of all ages, and heating and cooling systems were mounted for animal care.

Outside the barn, Maymont’s paddocks were restructured for easier access, and an improved fence was installed on the north side to facilitate feeding and interacting with goats and sheep.

Prior to renovations at the Farm, Maymont had only one classroom for educational programming, camps and birthday parties. Through the Spirit of Generosity Campaign, Maymont was able to build two new classrooms near the Farm parking lot. These new classrooms already have succeeded in serving more students and generating revenue for the Foundation by doubling capacity for birthday rentals. Each classroom is equipped with a north facing dormer that illuminates the space with natural light, as well as a private restroom. One of the classrooms is named for Mark and Melissa Christian and their family – long time donors to Maymont.

A significant expansion and structural improvements were made to Maymont’s restroom facilities, and a new industrial hand-washing station in the barn breezeway has made it easier for students, families and visitors to wash up quickly after interacting with the farm animals.

To encourage young guests to run, strut, hop and gallop like their favorite animals at Maymont, a play space was installed for guests and rental clients to enjoy. The play space, adjacent to Jack’s Vegetable Garden and the Farm classrooms, features faux rocks, logs and stumps for children to explore. In addition, Jack’s Vegetable Garden was expanded and visitors continue to receive freshly-picked vegetables during warm growing months, assisted by Maymont volunteers.

With all these exciting improvements to the Farm, Maymont expanded the parking lot to include additional spaces and installed a rain garden and bio-retention area, funded in part by grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Virginia Environmental Endowment. The new system allows for storm water runoff to be filtered through a series of natural descending steps in an effort to protect the neighboring James River and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay.

As guests arrive, new entry signage near the parking lot includes historical interpretation and an electronic donation machine that accepts both cash and credit card donations. Since installing the new technology, donations at the Farm have more than doubled.

After undergoing renovations for nearly a year, the Maymont Farm reopened in March 2017 with a Grand Re-opening celebration that drew tens of thousands of eager guests. Since the re-opening, Maymont has been able to expand its educational programming, increase event revenue, and engage the Richmond Region community with a farm in their very own backyard.
MAYMONT CREATING NEW FOUNDATION OFFICES AND COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE

The Maymont Foundation is making progress towards its first-ever centralized administrative office building at 1000 Westover Road, adjacent to the Maymont Farm parking lot.

A defining moment for the development came in 2012 when two properties bordering the Farm went on the market, and two generous donors stepped forward to help the Foundation purchase them.

Maymont offices currently are spread throughout the historic buildings on the estate — Marketing staff in the Stone Barn, Special Events staff in the Dooley Garage, and Development and Finance staff in the Carriage House.

The facility will be anchored by the 1918 Mediterranean style house at 1000 Westover, designed by noted architect Otis Asbury and built by Barksdale and Lathrop Construction. The historic interiors are being carefully restored and adapted to accommodate a reception area, offices and meeting spaces for internal and external functions.

Two new wings, designed by BCWH architects, will be added to the existing building. The wings will pay homage to the Mediterranean style, while also signaling a modern business sensibility. The wing nearest the Farm lot will become staff offices, and the wing along Shirley Road will create a community event and Board meeting room. This space, along with the entire first level of the house will be available for rental opportunities including small weddings, rehearsal dinners, corporate retreats, client events and other private functions. Senior staff offices will occupy the second level of the house itself.

The second section of the property, included in the original purchase, was cleared in 2017 and will become a landscaped area with a terrace called the Reinhart Family Courtyard.

The Maymont Foundation staff is looking forward to working in more efficient office space built to embrace today’s technology and communications platforms and most importantly to be ADA accessible for the first time ever. Staff also sees an opportunity for the entrance to the building to have a community-facing focus with signage that will highlight to all Farm visitors the presence of the Maymont Foundation and its services.

Plans for the 1st floor of the Maymont Foundation Headquarters. Loughridge Construction is the General Contractor for the project and began their work on the Westover house in December 2018.
Run of the River

THE ROBINS NATURE & VISITOR CENTER WILL UNDERGO $2.5 MILLION TRANSFORMATION

For the past 20 years, the Nature Center at Maymont has delighted children and adults with exhibits focused on Virginia wildlife and the James River. It first opened its doors in 1999 as a state of the art complex complete with aquariums and exhibits and has become a well-loved attraction for families in the Richmond region. Now 20 years later, it is getting a fresh new face and focus.

The once brand-new exhibits offered information on recycling, weather patterns and the water cycle. While the exhibits will continue to feature the James River, an important natural resource at Maymont’s back door, new enhancements will greatly expand interpretation and experiences relating to native flora and fauna of the region. The renovation, titled “Run of the River,” will celebrate Richmonders’ relationship with the James River, the vital waterway that elevated the City of Richmond into a prominent East Coast city. A new immersive freeform climbing structure, evoking the excitement of kayaking or rafting, will allow young guests to experience the James in all its diversity. The goal is to provide guests of all ages with opportunities to discover their own personal connections to the river.

The Robins Nature & Visitor Center, which draws about 33% of Maymont’s 600,000 visitors annually, will shut down in November 2019 for the extensive process of renovation and installation. Since the layout of the aquariums does not allow movement of the physical exhibits, contractors instead will work within the existing footprint of the building and take advantage of its 40-foot ceiling to “build up.” An artistic 30-foot climbing creation - the only interpretive climbing structure of its kind in Virginia – will provide children with an immersive experience as though they are part of the river. The elevated structure will allow for more exhibit space on the ground floor to add touch screens and interactive displays.

Maymont will keep its well-loved otter, as well as its popular venomous snakes and endangered sturgeon. The $2.5 million dollar project will include improvements to the exhibits, audiovisual programs, lighting and habitat renovation, as well as extensive lobby renovations.

The goal of the project is to provide an educational atmosphere that is fully immersive, allowing guests of all ages to be transported to the banks of the river. The addition of touch screens, multimedia and audiovisual displays will open up opportunities for more interactive educational experiences. With education remaining the true focus of the renovation, the ultimate objective is to help forge connections between guests and the natural environment in this region of the James River, turning them into lifelong stewards of the outdoors.
Dear Friends:

As we near the completion of the Spirit of Generosity Capital Campaign, we want to take a minute to focus on the beginning of the story of Maymont. The story that began when John and Sarah Dooley immigrated to America from Ireland, laying down roots in Richmond with their son, James Dooley, and his eight siblings, and building a successful hat manufacturing business.

It is inspiring to think that those humble beginnings would shape James Dooley into the man he became; the man who, with his wife Sallie, was responsible for laying the groundwork for Maymont becoming one of the great Gilded Age estates and a quintessential representation of the American dream. It is profound to see how the Maymont we know today made good on the early and loving sacrifices of John and Sarah Dooley by building a long history of bringing people together, providing meaningful experiences and creating lasting memories for everyone in the community.

In fact, as underscored in this newsletter, last year Maymont served over 765,000 people. That’s over three-quarters of a million points of impact. That’s 656,000 guests visiting admission-free; 42,900 students benefiting from education programs; 42,400 history lovers time-traveling during tours; and 27,500 nature lovers attending programs. More importantly, that’s over 765,000 people from different walks of life actively participating in our shared community which was built long ago by the Dooley family.

We will never know if James and Sallie Dooley envisioned the significant future of their estate when they bequeathed it to the City of Richmond for the public to enjoy. However, we like to think that James, with his proud heritage, and Sallie, with her strong values, felt it was their duty to give back to the community they helped to build, and that helped build them.

Thank you for sharing the Spirit of Generosity. With your generous financial and collaborative support, we are able to transform how guests experience Maymont and create a greater impact within and beyond our 100 acres. Please help us complete this chapter of the story of Maymont.

Gratefully,

C. Parke Richeson
Maymont Executive Director

Eric Nedell
President, Maymont Board of Directors

Walking around the Maymont Estate is one of my favorite Richmond activities. Whether I’m enjoying the mature specimen trees, the Japanese Garden, or seeing children delight over birds of prey or farm animals, a visit to Maymont feels like a mini vacation. After 20 years exploring the grounds, however, I have only recently been learning more about the Mansion itself — its history, outstanding architecture, furnishings, and art collection. One of Richmond’s great treasures!