





Front row, left to right: Mike Twomey, Paul Schmidt, Cheryl Patterson-Zaic, Sara Champion, Leslie Lindenauer, Rhonda Hill, Maggie McIntire. Back row, left to right: David Yaun, Tom Casey, Eric Johnson, Mark Seavy. Missing from photo: Vincent Conyers, Paula Curry, Katherine Love.

**Vision**

We strive to be a trusted and dynamic center of learning, committed to building the narrative about our site’s and nation’s history. We aim to promote engagement, curiosity, and critical thinking about the varied experiences that have shaped – and continue to shape – our communities.

**Mission**

Keeler Tavern Museum & History Center preserves and interprets our site’s historic buildings, robust collections, and diverse stories, creating a space for ongoing learning and open dialogue about how the events of the past connect to the present and shape our future.

**Board**

- |                 |                              |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
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**Staff**

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Hildegard Grob     | Executive Director                        |
| Catherine Prescott | Chief Curator & Assistant Museum Director |
| Mary Ann Connors   | Director of Private Events & Rentals      |
| Katie Burton       | Director of Education & Interpretation    |
| Jennifer Dineen    | Director of Development                   |
| Ishaar Gupta       | Operations Associate                      |
| John Bradley       | Interpretation Coordinator                |
| Georgia Novik      | Visitor Services Associate                |
| Roger Keller       | Caretaker                                 |



Left to right: Catherine Prescott, John Bradley, Ishaar Gupta, Hildegard Grob, Roger Keller, Jennifer Dineen, Katie Burton. Missing from photo: Mary Ann Connors and Georgia Novik.

At the Annual Meeting in May, the Board of Directors recognized Board President Sara Champion and Board Past President Rhonda Hill for their service and many significant contributions to the organization.



**LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT**

Our board, staff, and volunteers have worked together in FY25 to build and implement some of the most robust America250 programming in the state. On the eve of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, KTM&HC is leading the way to engage the community in celebrating and commemorating this important milestone. Our role as a respected and collaborative history organization positions us well to develop programming that encourages our audiences of all ages to learn and discuss our nation’s past, present, and future together.

These efforts are directly connected to our commitment to meet the moment: making sure our audiences know they can continue to turn to us for inclusive, interactive, and site-specific history that emphasizes a full and honest approach to our national narrative –

providing a useful foundation for our board of directors as we begin planning for our own significant milestone, KTM&HC’s 60th anniversary in 2026.

At the same time, staff and volunteers continue to meet the moment through our two-pronged mission: education and preservation. Our tours – “War at Home,” “Creating Community,” and the new “Beams to Balustrades” – provide opportunities for visitors to experience that approach every time they come to the museum. Staff and volunteers bring the site’s history to life, encouraging visitors to be curious and think critically as they are immersed in different time periods and themes.

I have been honored to lead KTM&HC’s board of directors for the past three years – working alongside other dedicated volunteers like my predecessor, Rhonda Hill, who rotated off the

board this year (but continues to steer our highly successful Holiday Boutique!). As I too leave the board and hand over the gavel to incoming president David Yaun, I am confident he and the board will use their time, talents, and enthusiasm to help the museum navigate all that lies ahead – from milestone anniversaries to funding challenges to exciting new programs and community collaborations.

Thank you for your support!

*Sara Champion*

Sara Champion, Board President





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year, I have been reminded time and again of how lucky we are to have a site as rich in history as Keeler Tavern Museum and History Center! Not only does our site’s history span multiple centuries and major events, but it also tells the complicated stories of a diverse group of people who lived and worked here, thus reflecting the greater American experience. Some stories are uplifting and some are distressing, but they all speak to who we are as a nation. We take our role seriously as a place where people can come to learn and think critically about how past events have brought us to where we are today, thereby helping us make informed decisions about the kind of world we want to create for future generations.

We do this by offering a wide range of programming and events for all ages, including museum tours, school programs, exhibitions, lectures, talks, and community events. One of



our flagship programs that meets the moment is our *Declaration Deep Dive Lecture Series* offered in partnership with the Ridgefield Library as a lead-up to the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026. Through scholarly lectures and community conversations, the series examines the Declaration’s words, its contemporary impact, and its legacies today.

Education is at the core of our museum’s mission. Our interactive, curriculum-aligned school programs serve hundreds of students annually and encourage curiosity, empathy, and critical thinking. For the 2024-2025 school year, KTM&HC’s Education Department hosted 107 classes, ranging from preschool to 12th grade, with some 2,000 students, including students from priority school districts, from 30 schools and 13 towns across Fairfield County and beyond.

Our finances have been challenging this past fiscal year due to cuts in grant funding, fluctuations in private donations, as well as

Fifth grade students from Shelter Rock Elementary School in Danbury pose with KTM&HC educators at the conclusion of their “Colonial Life” program in May. Shelter Rock teachers partner with KTM&HC annually, integrating the museum’s outreach and onsite programs into their social studies curriculum.

the increased costs of running a historic site. (As a note, we do NOT receive any ongoing town, state, or federal funding.) Preserving and operating a historic property with five historically significant buildings is an expensive undertaking that can easily run into a six-figure number or up to 20 percent of our budget. We started a multi-year upgrade of the heating and cooling system in the historic tavern. Dating back to the 1980s, the old heating system was inefficient and used wiring from the original radiators installed by Cass Gilbert in the early 1900s. There were also huge fluctuations in humidity which is detrimental for a historic house. With the generous support of grants from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop and Rotary of Ridgefield, we were able to accomplish the first phase of this project.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are approaching a major milestone in our institutional history: the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Keeler Tavern Preservation Society, Inc. Stay tuned for ways that you can help us celebrate this important milestone and stand up for history for generations to come!

*Hildegard Grob*

Hildegard Grob, Executive Director

FINANCES

KTM&HC continues to attract increased attention and visitors from Ridgefield and beyond. As always, we wish to express our thanks for the support of our many members, donors, and grantors, both public and private.

As we look forward to FY26 and beyond, our attention will be focused on observing (and celebrating) the 60th anniversary of our organization, and the 250th anniversaries of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the Battle of Ridgefield.

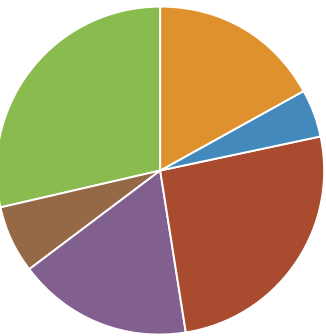
**Financial results charted at right are for Operations only and exclude major repairs, depreciation, and investment fees. Use of Investment Income includes the use of reserve funds to support operations.**

Operational support for FY25 decreased versus FY24 due to the timing and impact of major donors on our bottom line, which was largely offset by a very successful spring Gala. Operational expense increases generally reflect the increased complexity of our programs and operations.



SOURCES OF OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

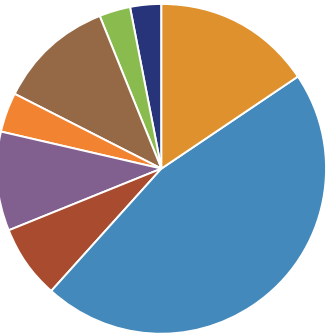
Grants and Restricted Donations	\$145,655
General Development	42,164
Fundraising Events	220,525
Rentals	146,334
Admissions, Programs & Education	58,984
Use of Investment Income	242,724
Total	\$856,386



Grants  
General Development  
Fundraising Events  
Rentals  
Admissions, Programs & Education  
Use of Investment Income

OPERATIONAL EXPENSES

Direct Program & Fundraising Costs	\$133,368
Staff Payroll & Benefits	394,832
Maintenance & Collections	63,844
Office & Technology	82,198
Accounting & Other Professional Services	33,580
Insurance & Utilities	98,149
Marketing	24,546
Interest	25,869
Total	\$856,386



Direct Program & Fundraising Costs  
Staff Payroll  
Maintenance & Collections  
Office & Technology  
Accounting, Professional & Banking  
Insurance & Utilities  
Marketing  
Interest

Left to right: Gala honorees Bryan Perri and Daniel C. Levine of A.C.T. of CT, KTM&HC Board President Sara Champion, and KTM&HC Executive Director Hildegard Grob.





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1. Our volunteer gardeners prep the walled garden for winter in mid-November. Left to right: Connie Fenton, Roger Keller, Ingrid Schaefer, Tamia Sullivan, and Loretta McMaster.
2. Gala honoree Bryan Perri brought the house down with his live rendition of Billy Joel, the Indigo Girls, and more – an exclusive performance at one of KTM&HC’s most exciting Gala celebrations ever.
3. Historian Dr. R. Isabela Morales shares some of the fascinating research and findings behind her award-winning book, *Happy Dreams of Liberty*, as one of the featured experts in KTM&HC’s Revolutionary Perspectives speaker series.
4. Best seat in the house! The children of longtime KTM&HC volunteer Martha Campbell – left to right, Doug Campbell, Heather Campbell, and Betsy Campbell Imbrogno – generously donated a memorial bench in their mother’s name to grace the busy sidewalk in front of our Visitor Center.
5. The third annual History on Tap event brought out longtime supporters and many new attendees to partake in a fun evening of tavern-themed activities – with gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches by Melt Mobile for dinner.
6. A newly married couple gets the party started in KTM&HC’s Garden House. Private events – including weddings – provide a historic setting for community gatherings and celebrations of life milestones.
7. First graders from A.J. Lewis Academy in Bridgeport follow Director of Education Katie Burton on their way to the museum, after visiting the #HandsOnHistory exhibit.
8. Young visitors create their own weavings at First Sunday, a monthly event offering free admission plus fun, hands-on activities for all ages.
9. Attendees of all ages – including many first-time visitors – came to hear spooky stories from notable “ghosts” from Ridgefield’s past at the museum’s annual Ghosts of Ridgefield tours.
10. Carpenter Jan Desiato works on custom repairs to our historic arbors in the walled garden. Thanks to support from grantors, donors, and members, KTM&HC continues to preserve the historic buildings, objects, and archives in its care.
11. A visitor refines flax, using real 18th-century tools, as part of KTM&HC’s immersive #HandsOnHistory exhibit.
12. The Holiday Boutique continues to be one of our most popular and successful volunteer-run initiatives. Holiday Boutique lead volunteers, from left to right: Hilary Micalizzi, Rhonda Hill, Jenn Hansen, and Claire Ganai.
13. Interpretation Coordinator John Bradley weaves storytelling and historical details to help Ridgefield fourth graders imagine the approach of British soldiers during the 1777 Battle of Ridgefield.
14. George Hancock (center) receives a Behind the Scenes Award from Ridgefield Arts Council co-chair Pamme Jones (left) and Ridgefield First Selectperson Rudy Marconi (right) in recognition of his longtime volunteerism and support for KTM&HC.
15. Continuing a years-long tradition, a group of dedicated marchers represented KTM&HC in Ridgefield’s Memorial Day Parade. Left to right: Miriam Martinez, Kam Daughters, George Hancock, Margo McEachern, Elizabeth Rogers, Don Daughters, and Catherine Prescott.



This list recognizes the many people whose contributions are the heartbeat of KTM&HC, and which might take the form of finances, in-kind donations, volunteer energy—or all three. All gifts acknowledged here were received between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. If your employer matched your donation, and/or you paid for membership, your name appears in the category that captures the combined total. Please direct corrections to the Museum office.

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Mary Durgee

“We had our wedding reception at the Garden House at Keeler Tavern Museum in August. It was everything we dreamed it would be. The location was absolutely gorgeous, all of our guests could not stop talking about the beauty of the location. . . . We also opted to do the museum tour and we could not be more happy that we did it. A lot of our guests went on the tour and had amazing things to say! Overall everything was perfect and came together exactly how we wanted it!”

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Frances Walton ★  
Deborah Whittemore ★  
Kimberly Wilson ★  
Virginia Witucke ★  
Barbara Wooten ★  
Ann Yancey  
Beth Yanity ★  
Todd Zagorec ★  
Chelsea Zantay

Volunteers

Laura Agisim  
Russ Baird  
Sandra Barrett  
Holly Bergeron  
Mary Ann Boyce  
Nancy Brandon  
Susan Bromley  
Robert Camera  
Emma Cukaj  
Joann DeBlasis  
Karen Doman  
Robin Geller  
Andy Jawlik  
Jane Jawlik  
Bridget Kager  
Jennifer Klotz  
Lily Klotz  
Kevin Lally  
Susan Lally  
Kari Lombardo  
Christopher Macris  
Lauren Mariani  
Lynette Mathias  
Michaela McLaughlin  
Olivia McLaughlin  
Cora Meres  
Mambi Nacholi  
John Papa  
Charlotte Pause



Catherine Prescott  
Elizabeth Rogers  
Michelle Schaffer  
Ann Schier  
Ingrid Shaefer  
Pearce Steele  
Amy Valentin

Matching Gift Companies

Chevron Corporation  
PepsiCo Foundation

Keeler Legacy Circle

*The Keeler Legacy Circle supports donors who would like to contribute to KTM&HC's long-term financial security through a bequest. Legacy membership represents an investment in, and a stewardship of, our museum.*

Sara Champion  
Philip and Christine Lodewick  
Joel Third

In-Kind Donors

109 Cheese & Wine  
À Table with Sarah + Bernard  
A.C.T. of Connecticut  
Adam Broderick Salon & Spa  
Amy Kahn Russell  
Andrea Rowan  
Bailey's Backyard  
Bella Home  
Catherine Prescott  
Cellar XV  
Charleston Spice Co.  
Colonial Cleaners  
Counterweight Brewing Company  
Couri Family  
David Yaun  
Deborah Ann's Sweet Shoppe  
Desires by Mikolay  
Don't Tell Comedy  
Elizabella's Bake Shop  
Fountain Inn  
Dr. George Amatuzzi  
Hollandia Nursery  
Interiors & Designs by Ursula  
Jay Steele  
Jenn and Jeff Hansen  
Laurent Lighting & Design  
Litchfield Distillery  
Matthew Franz

Friends Lost

*We note with sadness the passing of the following friends:*

Kay Ables  
Erika Askin  
Martha Campbell  
Thomas Fry  
Elise Haas  
Theresa Roes

Melissa Benedek  
Musicals at Richter  
Nod Hill Brewery  
Originals Imports  
Paul's Custom Pet Food  
Pelo by Edgardo  
Posa Ristorante & Vineria  
Prospector Theater  
Ridgefield Bicycle Company  
Ridgefield Garden Club  
Ridgefield Independent Film Festival  
Ridgefield Playhouse  
Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra  
Ridgefield Theater Barn  
Salem Golf Club  
She La La  
Silver Spring Country Club  
Southwest Café  
Susan Scala  
Terra Sole Restaurant  
The Aldrich Contemporary Museum  
The Benjamin  
The Frame Shop  
The Pilates Greenhouse  
Thrown Stone Theatre  
Tina Phillips  
Treated Groom Spa  
Underground Co.  
W&E Transportation



*KTM&HC mourns the passing of staff member Erika Askin, who managed the museum's archival collections for many years. A talented artist with an infectious laugh and a big heart, Erika is dearly missed.*



“We loved our trip yesterday, the school is buzzing with excitement that the first graders have brought back! It was so well organized and the perfect amount of time for us. We really hit all of the major connections we wanted to and the students were engaged and excited! . . . We will definitely be back!”

-Teachers from Adam J. Lewis Academy, Bridgeport

**Keeler Tavern**



**Museum**  
and History Center

