

President's Corner



Kevin Sullivan, President and CEO of The Children's Museum

Well, it's been a little over a year on the job, and I find myself thinking about why what we do here is so important.

Do you remember the first time you picked up a frog or chased butterflies in the woods? The first time you saw the stars come out in a planetarium sky? Wondering how a favorite toy worked? Your first science experiment? Remember the lasting joy of discovery and lessons learned? That's what we do for over 200,000 kids and families every year at The Children's Museum in West Hartford, at our Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton, and in school classrooms all across the state

Moments of wonder and discovery come naturally to kids, but what happens when too few children really get to experience science? Sadly, we know the answer. Last year, 45% of all fifth graders failed the statewide science assessment, and the results were dismal in our neediest school districts. Most kids, especially girls, are turned off to science by middle school and then never take more than a few required courses from high school through college.

With the "No Child Left Behind" mandates driving more drilling in reading and math during school time, there is less time for hands-on science in class and even outside of class through field trips or in-school science outreach. Many elementary and middle school teachers have little background in science and all teachers have too

few opportunities to update their knowledge of science or even teaching science.

None of this is acceptable at a time when science skills are an engine of educational attainment, economic growth, and opportunity, or at a time when more and more of the decisions we make as citizens require us to be more science-informed.

As a new report from the National Research Council says so clearly, our schools cannot do it alone. See the report here: www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12190#toc. That's why places like The Children's Museum are more important than ever. Whether it's our exhibits and animals, outreach to schools and youth groups, vacation camps or even birthday parties and camp-ins, it's all about science education linked to state science standards. The secret is we also do it in ways that are kid-sized, family-friendly, hands-on, and fun. Sometimes we call it "disguised learning." Our pre-schoolers, elementary schoolers and middle schoolers think it's just fun, but we know it is teaching and learning.

Unfortunately, science learning in non-school settings, where kids spend most of their time, is too often overlooked. Yet there is mounting evidence that non-school science programs feed the science interests of younger children, positively influence academic achievement and expand their sense of future science career options – especially when connected with parents at home and teachers in school.

Far more than supplementary enrichment, science museums and centers (especially those like ours that focus on younger children and families) offer the direct, hands-on experience of science that makes all the difference. The NRC report is a clarion call for a broader, deeper and more deliberate partnership between informal and formal science education. Younger children are constantly wondering, testing, experimenting, and discovering. It's the time when we have our best opportunity to engage, motivate and inform the natural scientists inborn in them. This is the stuff of real science and a solid foundation for more. This is our best chance to get it right from the start.

At The Children's Museum, we offer the trifecta of science learning: building on everyday and family learning; offering exhibits, natural environments and real experiences after school and out of school. And we help teachers freshen their science skills with real science and bring hands-on science back into our schools.

No wonder membership here (with benefits at children's museums and science centers across the nation), our programs and exhibits, our outreach to schools and youth groups, and donating to The Children's Museum, is such a great investment.

STEVESONGS CONCERT TO BENEFIT THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



Thursday April 16, 2009

**10:30 am at Wolcott Elementary School
71 Wolcott Road, West Hartford**

Steve Roslonek of SteveSongs will perform his award-winning music for kids and families in a solo concert to benefit The Children's Museum. Steve's signature songs are educational and entertaining – music that both kids and parents will enjoy.

Tickets are \$10 in advance on the Tour page at www.stevesongs.com or by calling 1.800.937.3397. Remaining tickets will be sold at the door for \$15. Children under age 2 are free. For more information, call 860.231.2830 x51.

AETNA FOUNDATION MAKES COMMITMENT TO SCIENCE EDUCATION



The Aetna Foundation's commitment of \$50,000 will be used over the next two years to provide science programs to approximately 2,000 students a year through the Museum's Science Achievement for All program. Science Achievement for All is The Children's Museum's cornerstone science classroom program that has served Connecticut's Priority School Districts and schools for over 14 years. This program provides science-related educational programs on-site and at schools, free of charge, to needy classrooms statewide.

CYBERSAFARI HAS A GRAND OPENING



At December's grand opening of CyberSafari, guests tried out the exhibit's student-centered, imaginative learning games. At this computer lab designed for kids, parents and children can work together at problem-solving while having fun with technology.

Megabyte the Lion was at the opening event to lend a paw to young guests trying out the new software.

The Hartford is Top Sponsor For Annual Fundraiser on May 9

We are pleased to announce that The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. will be the Presenting Garden Sponsor for *A Child's World*, the Museum's annual fundraiser to be held on the evening of May 9, 2009 at Tumble Brook Country Club in Bloomfield. The dinner and auction event, co-hosted by WFSB newscasters Kara Sundlun and Dennis House, will focus on support for the work of the Museum as a major resource in science and nature education for younger children and families – including thousands of students through school outreach in classrooms all across the state.

For tickets or more information, visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/annual_fundraiser.asp.

For a list of other ongoing Museum fundraising events, visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org/fundraisers.asp.

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THE HARTFORD



Vacation Science

APRIL VACATION

Join us for action-packed days of scientific investigations, games, Museum exploration, amazing planetarium shows, up-close encounters with live animals, and much more.

This year we will be running two April Vacation Science Camp weeks, April 13-17 and April 20-24, to accommodate the various school vacations.

Monday April 13 or 20

Bubble Blast - Burst onto the scene with soapy science. Concoct a bubble potion. Step inside a giant bubble. Discover amazing colors, patterns, shapes, and sizes.

Tuesday April 14 or 21

Grossology II - Back by popular demand and still as messy as ever! Dabble with the disgusting side of science. Experiment with your senses. Take home a gross concoction.

Wednesday April 15 or 22

Mystery Solved - Put on your investigator's cap for a day of forensic science. Collect and analyze evidence in our lab. Interrogate suspects. Determine "who dunnit."

Thursday April 16 or 23

Creepy Creatures - Investigate snakes, slugs, spiders and more. Meet some critters. Create "buggie" buddies. Learn what hangs in the corners and lurks in your yard.

Friday April 17 or 24

Balloon Festival - Stretch your imagination and explore the fantastic force of balloon power. Build air-powered vehicles. Create balloon artwork. Become a "balloonatic" for the day.

When: 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Who: Children in grades 1 - 5
Cost: \$55/day for The Children's Museum members
\$65/day for non-members

SUMMER SCIENCE CAMP

The fun and learning continues this summer with our best ever Summer Science Camp. We're planning an action-packed summer chock full of old favorites and some great new additions. Each exciting week offers hands-on exploration for young scientists entering grades 1 through 6.

Week of July 6	Art Squad
Week of July 13	Junior Vets
Week of July 20	Young Wizards
Week of July 27	Space Cadets
Week of August 3	Robo Engineers
Week of August 10	Lab Rats
Week of August 17	Eco Explorers

For more information, visit our website at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

REGISTRATION

To register for April or Summer Camp, contact our Registration Department at 860.231.2830 x44.



Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF ASTRONOMY SPECIAL EVENTS

ASTRONOMY AND OWL PROWL

Friday April 17, 2009 (Rain/cloud date: Sunday April 19, 2009)
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

This event takes place at Roaring Brook Nature Center. Join staff from the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium for a look at the spring sky. Following a brief discussion and astronomy project in the Nature Center auditorium, Nature Center staff will conduct a walk through the woods to open fields where we'll use telescopes to observe the heavens. As an added bonus, we'll look and listen for owls along the way, as well as discuss the nesting habits of the Barred Owls that often breed in our woods.

Pre-registration is required for this program as space is limited. It is not for very young children. Dress for cooler spring evening temperatures and possibly wet conditions underfoot.

ANIMALS IN SPACE

Thursday May 28, 2009
7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Two monkeys named Able and Miss Baker were the first living things to travel to space and back. Come celebrate the 50th Anniversary of their flight on the Jupiter MRBM AM-18. In the planetarium we will watch "Astronaut," a full-dome show about the space program. Afterwards, we will talk about some famous animal astronauts and how they have helped us reach the stars. Participate in a model rocket launch and view Saturn through a telescope (weather permitting).

REGISTRATION

\$8/person for The Children's Museum Members, \$10/ person for non-members
Call 860.231.2830 x44 or e-mail Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

The staff at the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium is always busy planning events. Visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org for the latest information.



Top African-American Scientist Visits The Children's Museum for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

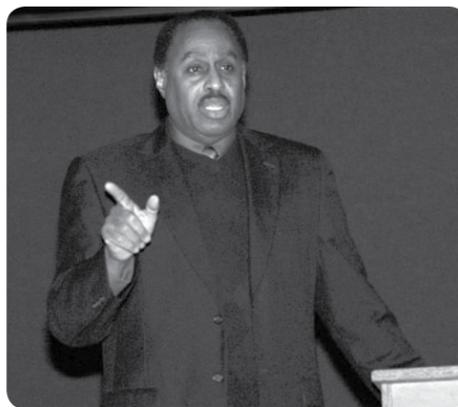


Photo by Al Valerio

Ronald L. Mallett, Ph.D., Professor of Physics at the University of Connecticut, gave a special talk to a crowd of more than fifty in the Travelers Science Dome. Dr. Mallett discussed his life and *Time Traveler: A Scientist's Personal Mission to Make Time Travel a Reality*, the story of his childhood and the early death of his father, which inspired him to discover the mathematical formulas for building a working time machine.

Dr. Mallett spoke about his work on black holes and cosmology, presented a portion of his interview in the History Channel documentary, "The Universe: Unexplained Mysteries," and hinted at the process by which his book is being made into a feature film by influential director Spike Lee. Dr. Mallett also answered audience questions and signed copies of his book. For additional information on Dr. Mallett, visit his website: www.phys.uconn.edu/~mallett/main/main.htm

Earth Day Celebration

Saturday April 18, 2009
6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Join The Children's Museum in celebrating Earth Day. Jump into fun in a super inflatable bounce, take home a seedling tree, create a bird field guide, learn about bee keeping and other Earth-friendly activities, or just relax by the bonfire.

This event is sponsored in part by Cabot Creamery.

\$10/person for The Children's Museum Members
\$12/ person for non-members

To register, call 860.231.2830 x44 or e-mail Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Croc Night

Friday May 1, 2009
6:30 pm

This event will begin with an alligator and crocodile-centered episode of the PBS/CPTV series *Nature*. Then visit with and learn about these fascinating ancient creatures during a presentation by Mike Ralbovsky of Rainforest Reptile Shows. Audience members can get up close and personal with some alligator and crocodile friends, including special guest Creole, one of only 30 true albino alligators in the entire world.

\$10/person for The Children's Museum Members
\$12/ person for non-members

To register, call 860.231.2830 x44 or e-mail Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.



UNITED TECHNOLOGIES
Wildlife
Sanctuary

The Density Rainbow

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

4 clear cups
teaspoon
sugar
food coloring (4 different colors)
clear straws

WHAT TO DO

Fill the four cups with equal amounts of water (about 2/3 full is good). Add three teaspoons of sugar to the first cup, two teaspoons of sugar to the second cup, and one teaspoon of sugar to the third cup. Don't add any sugar to the fourth cup. Stir up the first 3 cups until all the sugar has dissolved. Add a drop or two of food coloring to each cup and stir, making each cup a different color.

Dip a straw into the cup that has no sugar - only a little bit! Then put your finger on top of the straw and lift it out. You'll have a small amount of colored water at the bottom of your straw. Dip the straw into the cup with one teaspoon of sugar, going a little bit deeper than you did the first time, release your finger for a moment, then put it back on top of the straw. Now when you lift the straw up, you'll have two separate layers of color. Try again with the next two cups, dipping the straw a little deeper each time.

SECRET OF THE DENSITY RAINBOW

Though it looks like they have the same amount of liquid in them, the different cups have different amounts of stuff (or matter) in them. The cup with three teaspoons of sugar has more matter in it than the cup with only one teaspoon of sugar. When you add more matter to a given space (or volume), the density increases. The water with no sugar in it will float on top of a liquid that is more dense (like the water with sugar dissolved in it).

Venomous New Friends Move In

After being removed from a Milford, CT, residence by the local animal control department, several arthropods have found a home in the UTC Wildlife Sanctuary. The new crew includes an Egyptian Death Stalker Scorpion, which is considered one of the most deadly scorpions, as well as a Red Bark Scorpion, two Emperor Scorpions, and a King Baboon Tarantula, all of which are venomous. Several Giant Millipedes and Hissing Cockroaches are also in the group.

Arthropods have segmented bodies, jointed limbs, and molt their exoskeletons. It is illegal to keep these particular species as pets in Connecticut.

Like all new animals at the Sanctuary, these bugs start their residence under observation before being available for public viewing. They should be out and about at the Museum (but in securely locked habitats, of course) by summer.

Leave a Legacy

"Children are one third of our population and all of our future."

Select Panel for the Promotion of Child Health, 1981



Please consider The Children's Museum in your estate plans and help ensure a bright future.

For information, contact
Dawn Veillette Diana at
860.231.2830 x51 or
ddiana@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org

*Inspiring generations of
scientists and naturalists
since 1927*

Have an Ed-venturous Birthday Party



Celebrate your child's special day with an exciting science and nature-themed party at The Children's Museum. All of our parties include a private animal demonstration, supervised exploration in our hands-on exhibit halls, and an exciting show in the Travelers Science Dome at the Gengras Planetarium. Add an extra twist by choosing our Fossil Fun Party for a budding paleontologist or our Little Hands Party for the youngest explorers.

For more information on our packages, visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org or call 860.231.2830 x44.

The Children's Museum Preschool

Tales & Tails

The Museum's popular toddler series is offered once again this spring. Tales & Tails is available to our youngest audience, children ages 18 months to 3 years. Meet four of the Museum's animals, participate in arts and crafts activities, and enjoy story time. The Wednesday 9:30 am series will begin on April 8, 2009.

To register call 860.231.2830 x44.

April Vacation Program Be Kind to Mother Nature

Don't miss the fun during April school vacation, April 13-17. Children ages 4, 5, and 6 will enjoy celebrating spring, hands-on recycling and reusing activities, and plantings. Choose a half-day or full-day option.

To register, call the Preschool at 860.523.7449

Summer Exploration Playce 2009

Summer sessions are held from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm

June 29-July 2	Shoo Fly Don't Bother Me
July 6-10	Jungle Fever
July 13-17	Up, Up and Away
July 20-24	3-2-1 Blast Off
July 27-31	Mix It Up
August 3-7	Let's Pretend-Pirates and Princesses
August 10-14	Commotion in the Ocean

To register, call the Preschool at 860.523.7449

Volunteer Spotlight

Roseanne Wallace UTC Wildlife Sanctuary Volunteer

What kind of tasks do you do? I help clean the animal enclosures and feed the animals. I also take the animals out for enrichment activities and demonstrations.

What keeps you coming back? Why do you volunteer? I come back because the staff is awesome and the animals became part of my pet family. I volunteer in the UTC Wildlife Sanctuary because the animals give back as much as you give them.

Why would you encourage others to volunteer at the Museum? It is rewarding after cleaning up to be able to play with the different animals and learn about them. Others will hopefully have the same experience if they choose to volunteer.

The Children's Museum welcomes volunteers interested in assisting guests, leading simple public demonstrations, and helping out in all departments. CyberSafari, the Museum's kid-friendly computer lab, requires volunteers who like to work with computers. If you are interested in volunteering please contact

Jennifer Parker at
jparker@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org
or 860.231.2830 x38.

the children's museum

The Children's Museum

950 Trout Brook Drive
West Hartford, CT 06119-1437

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ROARING BROOK NATURE CENTER



SPRING 2009

70 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019
860.693.0263

www.roaringbrook.org

Nature Center Hours: Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sundays from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Trails through Werner's Woods are open daily from dawn until dusk.

SPRING DISCOVERY DAYS PROGRAMS

Registration is now open for Discovery Days, the Nature Center's enrichment series for young children, as they continue into the exciting spring season with new program offerings.

NATURE FOR LITTLE ONES

Fridays 9:30 am to 10:30 am

These spring programs for two-year-olds accompanied by parents (or grandparents) will provide them with an introduction to the world of nature through seasonal topics. Child must be two years old. Register for all seven sessions at a cost of \$60 for members, \$75 for non-members. Register for one or more individual dates at \$10 for members, \$15 for nonmembers. Sessions will be held on the following dates: April 17, 24; May 1, 8, 22, 29; June 5.

The cost for each of the following programs is \$40 for members, \$50 for non-members.

EXPLORING TOGETHER

Fridays 1:15 pm to 2:15 pm

This series introduces pre-school children (ages 3 to 5 and accompanied by parents) to seasonal changes in the natural world and gives parent and child an opportunity to learn together. A younger sibling may attend for a \$10 discount, with no charge for siblings under age 2. Portions of the program are held outdoors. Please dress accordingly. April-May Sessions: April 17, 24; May 1, 8
May-June Sessions: May 15, 22, 29; June 5

PROGRAMS FOR 4 AND 5 YEAR OLDS

Thursdays 10:00 am to 11:00 am

These programs are for kindergarten students and children in kindergarten readiness programs. Children are not accompanied by parents for these programs.

WELCOME TO SPRING

The spring season has finally arrived. New animals appear almost daily! How many can we find? April 16, 23, 30; May 7

NESTING TIME!

From tadpoles and caterpillars to nestlings and "pups," this is the season for animal babies. May 14, 21, 28; June 4

SPRING STORY HOURS

Mondays 1:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Story hour continues through spring with one-hour programs on the second Monday of the month. Geared for children ages 2 to 5, each program may include a craft and/or a short nature walk. There is no charge, but reservations are requested. Children must be accompanied by adults. April 13, May 11

WEEKEND PROGRAMS/EVENTS FOR ALL AGES

SATURDAY BIRD WALKS

Saturdays 7:00 am to 9:00 am

An early morning walk through Werner's Woods provides welcome sights and sounds for beginning birders as well as those with more experience in the field. Bird walks are not geared for younger children. Bring binoculars and dress for wet ground underfoot. Cost: \$2 for members, \$3 for non-members. April 25; May 2, 23

SUNDAY FAMILY NATURE WALKS

Sundays 2:00 pm to 3:30 pm

These guided walks are geared for all ages. Cost: \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members. Cost for children 12 and under: \$2 for members, \$3 for non-members. Pre-registration is not required.

May 10 - Spring Wildflowers (Moms admitted free)

May 31 - Butterflies, Dragonflies and Other Unusual Insects

SUNDAY AM HIKE & YOGA

Sunday May 3, 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join Collinsville Yoga Center Instructor Leslie Gordon for an easy beginner's yoga session in our auditorium. The yoga session will be preceded by a brisk one-hour walk along the farther trails of the Werner's Woods Preserve. Pre-registration is required. Cost: \$25 for members, \$30 for non-members.

EVENING VERNAL POOLS WALK

Friday April 3, 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Join us as we learn about the amphibians that inhabit vernal pools. Look and listen for barred owls and search for nocturnal wildlife. Pre-registration is required for this program as space is limited. It is not geared for very young children. Cost: \$6 for members, \$8 for non-members.

WILDLIFE RAMBLE

APRIL VACATION PROGRAM FOR GRADES K-6

Monday April 20

Spend a day looking for wildlife at Roaring Brook Nature Center. We'll peer into vernal pools looking for tadpoles, watch for migrating birds returning from the south, look for early insects, and try to determine if the harsh winter has had any effect upon wildlife populations.

Grades K-1 meet from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Cost: \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members

Grades 2-6 meet 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Bring a lunch. Cost: \$50 for members, \$65 for non-members

FAMILY CONCERTS

Family concerts at Roaring Brook Nature Center are one-hour performances.

STARR & SHELO

Sunday April 5, 2:00 pm

Collinsville-based duo Starr & Shello return to our stage. Vocalizing in harmony, sometimes a cappella, sometimes accompanied by guitar, djembe and percussion, this dynamic duo delivers great music certain to brighten your family's day. Advance tickets are available at a cost of \$6 for members, \$7 for non-members. Remaining tickets will be sold at the door for \$8.

THE SUBSTITUTES

Friday April 24, 7:30 pm

Canton's favorite "teacher" band, The Substitutes provide an evening of family fun. The concert is a benefit for the Nature Center and the Canton Land Conservation Trust's "Trailblazer" program. Advance tickets are now on sale at \$4 for children and \$8 for adults (\$20 maximum per family). Remaining tickets will be sold at the door prior to the show at a cost of \$5 for children and \$10 for adults.

HUNT FOR WILD FOOD WITH "WILDMAN" STEVE BRILL

Saturday June 6

On Saturday June 6, Roaring Brook Nature Center will present world-famous naturalist "Wildman" Steve Brill who will provide both a one-hour morning lecture and an afternoon hike through Werner's Woods in search of wild edibles. Brill is best known for having been handcuffed and arrested by undercover park rangers for eating a dandelion in Central Park.

He is the author of *Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants in Wild (and Not-So-Wild) Places* and *The Wild Vegetarian Cookbook* and stars in "Wild Edible Basics," the first of a video/DVD series on foraging. Brill will offer a lecture in the Center's auditorium beginning at 10:30 am. Following a one-hour lunch break, an afternoon walk will begin at 12:30 pm. The cost for both lecture and walk is \$10 per person in advance. Any remaining spaces will be \$15 at the door. Pre-registration with payment is required. This program is co-sponsored by the Canton Land Conservation Trust. Additional information is available by calling the Nature Center at 860.693.0263.

WINTER PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT

Susan Forbes Hansen's black-and-white winter photography grew out of a series of New Year's cards that she has been sending to friends for at least 30 years. An exhibit of her work entitled "The Black and White Season" will hang in the auditorium at Roaring Brook Nature Center through the end of winter. Hansen, whose voice is familiar as a folk-radio host on non-commercial radio in Connecticut, has had her photographs used as CD covers by numerous folk artists including Amy Gallatin who, along with her band Stillwaters, will present a concert at the Nature Center this spring.

NATURE CENTER 2009 SUMMER PROGRAMS

The Nature Center mails its summer program brochure to all who participated in our programs in 2008, as well as to members who live in neighboring Farmington Valley towns. If you would like to receive a summer program brochure, please call us at 860.693.0263 or send us a short e-mail at rbnc@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.