

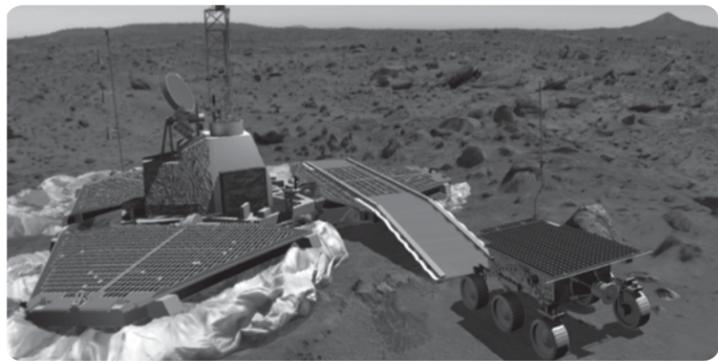
WHALE TALES

WINTER 2010

The Newsletter of The Children's Museum and Roaring Brook Nature Center

The Martian Invasion Has Begun

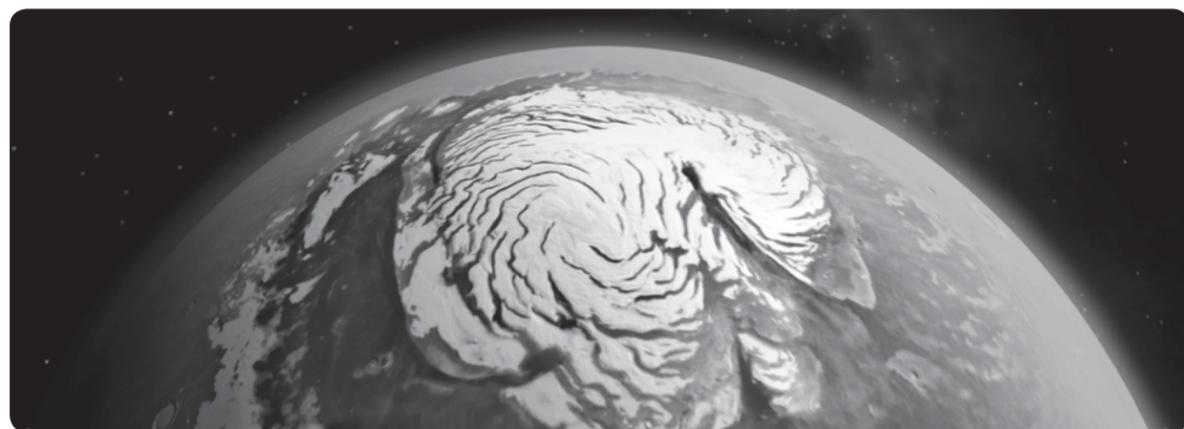
The Children's Museum's newest planetarium show at the Travelers Science Dome, *Invaders of Mars*, premiered November 19. This presentation allows you to explore the Martian surface as seen by Earth's "invaders" – various spacecraft that have visited the red planet since Viking 1 first landed there in 1976. Experience flying over great chasms, canyons and volcanoes, land on an icy polar cap, and watch amazing dust devils swirling over the planet's surface.



Pathfinder on the Mars surface in *Invaders of Mars*

This new show is another fascinating addition to the venue of dramatic, fun and family-friendly planetarium shows in our full-dome theater, the largest of its kind in Connecticut. Since the planetarium was originally funded by the Gengras Family in 1968, the Museum's SciDome system was installed in 2007 thanks to a gift from Travelers Insurance. Visitors enjoy immersive movies as well as live night sky tours on its 40-foot spherical dome.

In addition to pre-recorded films and original sky shows, staff of the Travelers Science Dome will soon begin work on a fully computer-rendered planetarium program comparing Earth and Mars. This will be The Children's Museum's first full-dome planetarium production. It will be part of the Museum's From the Red to the Blue Planet program, which will commence in spring 2011. The new exhibit and a wide variety of supportive teaching programs, science outreach, and creative activities is the result of a three-year, \$589,000 grant from NASA. It's an exciting continuation of the long and successful planetarium tradition already in place.



A polar ice cap on Mars in a scene from *Invaders of Mars*

Support for showing *Invaders from Mars* by The Children's Museum made possible under Grant No. NNX10AK13G with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this show are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



Flight Day Features Plenty of Hot Air

Hundreds of children shared a unique experience at The Children's Museum on Columbus Day – they were able to go inside a hot air balloon. Not inside the basket, but actually inside the balloon itself. Thanks to Mick Murphy of Aer Blarney, a local hot-air balloon company, Museum guests watched as Murphy and his team partially inflated a large training balloon, using a special fan. With participants and the Aer Blarney team tethering the balloon as it lay on its side on the ground outside the Museum, children were able to walk into the colorful interior. Visitors also helped deflate then re-inflate the balloon, and learned about the adventures of ballooning.

The next Flight Day will be held on February 23.

Laser Shows Return in December

Check the calendar inside for dates and times. We're having a special Laser Holiday Open House, too.

HomeSchool Days in January and March

Learn more inside about these great programs for children ages five to 13.



President's Corner

Kevin Sullivan
President and CEO of
The Children's Museum

Happy holidays to all and best wishes for the new year ahead.

For The Children's Museum and our Roaring Brook Nature Center, 2010 was a year of challenges and opportunities. Like businesses and families all over Connecticut, it's been more of a struggle in these difficult economic times. So we have worked harder to raise funds, cut costs, and innovate while staying true to our success as an educational and recreational resource for children and families — a place where science and nature are fun.

Why science and nature? Think about those trapped Chilean miners and all the science behind their amazing rescue. Think about the Gulf Coast oil spill and the precarious natural world in which we live. Think about the huge educational achievement gap in Connecticut. It's not too much to say that The Children's Museum is here to help teach important lessons and values for generations to come. It may look like kids just playing in our new flight exhibit, just enjoying a movie at our Science Dome Theater or just having a fun walk in the woods at Roaring Brook Nature Center, but it's so much more. It's all about experiences that teach and lessons learned that better prepare kids for school and for life.

So our New Year's resolution at The Children's Museum is to do what we do even better and reach even more children, families, teachers, and schools. The year 2011 will see more of our special Family Science Sundays, more education outreach in schools and after-school programs, the roll-out of our big NASA-funded initiative, a major new exhibit, and membership that's still a great bargain for free family attendance here as well as at children's museums and science centers across the nation and even worldwide.

For all of this, we need you even more as members, donors and friends. As we begin a new year, we also welcome your advice. I hope you will always feel free to e-mail me (ksullivan@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org) with your thoughts on how we are doing, what we can do better, and how you can help. Together, let's make it a great new year for The Children's Museum.

Family Science Sunday Heats Up



This exciting (and safe and controlled) experiment was one of the many fun and educational demos from our recent Combustion Sunday. Read about our upcoming Family Science Sunday programs inside.

Save the Date for A Child's World

May 7, 2011 at Tumble Brook Country Club. Read more about the upcoming gala on the back cover.

Get Your Hands on Science

An Experiment You Can Do at Home from The Children's Museum

Our Family Science Sunday series takes off with rocket experiments and much more on Space Sunday - February 20. In the meantime, practice your launches with this homemade rocket.

What You'll Need

A straw Paper Scissors
Post-it notes Scotch tape A pencil

What To Do

1. Tear off a single Post-It note.
2. Roll it around a pencil. Make sure to orient it so that the sticky part is rolled over last to hold your rocket together.
3. Remove the pencil.
4. Fold over the top quarter section and tape it down.
5. Cut out triangles from the paper and tape them on to the Post-it tube to make fins.
6. Load your rocket onto a straw.
7. Aim your rocket **away from others**. Blow to launch!

Try This

1. Does changing how hard you blow affect how the ship travels?
2. What happens if you change the location or the angle of the fins?

How Does It Work?

A force (not the Star Wars kind!) is a push or pull. Once you blow through the straw, your breath applies a force to your rocket, which pushes it off the straw. Once it starts flying, the rocket would remain in flight except that the force of gravity pulls it down to the ground.

The fins on a rocket act as stabilizers. Without fins, your rocket would tend to tumble as the air around it pushed on its sides. However, with the fins, the air not only pushes against the sides of the rocket, but also against the fins. This can help keep the rocket on a (more or less) straight path, depending on how you mount your fins.

Thanks to The Children's Museum of Houston for this experiment!



LEGO Children's Fund Supports Preschool Science Literacy

Thanks to a \$5,000 grant from the LEGO Children's Fund, The Children's Museum will create a new science learning program for preschoolers and their caregivers. The *Little Hands Science Workshop* is a series of classes that encourages adult/child creative collaborative learning. Each week in the series, students will explore a different science-themed creative experience which was developed using the standards from the *Connecticut Preschool Framework*. The workshop will include hands-on experiments, exciting demonstrations, live animals, related books, and hands-on art projects, with topics ranging

from insects and bubbles to magnets and color theory.

Integral to this new program is the participation of a parent or caregiver. By empowering the caregiver to build on a child's strengths, it becomes possible for the experience to move beyond the classroom and into the home.

We thank the LEGO Children's Fund for providing the funding to create this new education program!



Two HomeSchool Days Coming Up Soon

You spoke and we heard you! Our September HomeSchool Day was such a hit, we've added not one, but two more days in the upcoming months. As supporters of your family's choice for self-directed, home-based education, we invite children who are homeschooled to visit the Museum, tour our exhibits and take part in classroom and planetarium programs on **January 18** and **March 9**. Our workshops and planetarium shows are appropriate for children ages five to 13.

We've chosen some exciting topics for the January session. Younger children can explore the lifecycle of frogs, invent a "machine" to meet a creative challenge, and learn the reasons for seasons. Children in the third through fifth grade-range can experiment with dry ice and the states of matter, bust some popular myths, and "sail" the Connecticut River in the planetarium. Older children will embark on the hybrid highway, unearth secrets of ancient Egypt, and journey to the stars.

Visit our website at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org for more information. Pre-registration is required. Contact our Registration Department at 860.231.2830 x44 or email Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.



It's News to Me

Science in Current Events for Kids

This fall, it was announced that astronomers had discovered a "Goldilocks planet." They use this term because the planet is not too hot and not too cold, just like the third serving of porridge eaten by the story character Goldilocks. However, these scientists aren't talking about eating breakfast. They are interested in whether or not water can be a liquid on the surface of the planet, which is called Gliese 581g (sounds like GLEE-za). When it is too hot, water will always be vapor. When it is too cold, water will always be ice. When the temperature is just right, water can be a liquid, the way it is on most of the surface of the Earth.

Linked to Science

From the Museum to the Web

The Science Explorer

If you like the experiments you see in Get Your Hands on Science, you'll love The Science Explorer. This website has all sorts of fun, messy, hands-on science activities for families, all brought to you by the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

www.exploratorium.edu/science_explorer/

Sea and Sky

Sea and Sky was started by a graphic designer to share his love of astronomy and the oceans. Today, it is a fantastic source of images of sea life and deep space.

www.seasky.org

Thinking About Gifts? Think The Children's Museum

Holiday shopping at The Children's Museum is a great way to give the joy of learning about science and nature to the special people in your life. All purchases help support our educational programs, so you'll be spreading this joy throughout your community, too.

Make the Museum Experience Your Gift to a Family This Year. Membership to The Children's Museum allows a family to enjoy the Museum's exhibits and daily activities as often as they like, for a full year. Take advantage of a year of free visits and Travelers Science Dome shows, generous discounts on programs and events, and opportunities for free admission at hundreds of reciprocating museums nationwide. Don't delay, memberships purchased as gifts will receive an extra month of membership. That's 13 months for the price of 12. To purchase a membership, call 860.231.2830 x51, e-mail ddiana@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org, or go to www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org and click on "Join Us."

Adopt an Animal and Support the UTC Wildlife Sanctuary. You can help care for the more than 100 animals housed in the Wildlife Sanctuary at the Museum by "adopting" an animal. Adoption fees pay for food, bedding, enrichment, veterinarian bills, and medications. For a \$25 adoption fee, you will receive an 8x10-inch picture and biography of your animal, an official adoption certificate, a magnet, and a quarterly e-newsletter from the Wildlife Sanctuary Director. For more information, e-mail Cindy King, Wildlife Sanctuary Director, at cking@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Adopt a Star in the Travelers Science Dome. Sponsor a star in the planetarium sky. The donor, or the recipient of his or her choice, gets a certificate of adoption, a sky map with the star's location, and recognition in the Science Dome for five years. Stars are priced from \$25. Call Planetarium Director, Kristie Mazzoni, at 860.231.2830 x40 for more information.

Shop Online. Visit our online store at www.cafepress.com/TCMstoreCT for shirts for kids and adults, and our magnets, too.



Winter Brings More Great Family Science Sundays

Sponsored by a generous donation from The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc., Family Science Sundays have been a rousing success. We've been visited by giant lizards, a professional bubble-ologist, The Mark Twain House, and the West Hartford Fire Department. We've had mind-blowing demonstrations, hands-on experiments and take-home items for guests.

Thank you very much to visitors at October's Combustion Sunday, who helped us raise over \$150 for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

Monthly Family Science Sunday programs run from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on designated Sundays and are **free** with general admission.

The series is supported by a \$50,000 grant awarded to the Museum by The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. as part of its Bicentennial Celebration. Each program draws from the Museum's rich content areas in astronomy, nature, technology, and physical sciences. Here's what's coming this winter:

December 19 Robo Sunday

Face the towering security robot called Axeous, meet the high school scientists of the FIRST Robotics League, enter the Circuitry Lab, and take command of the Museum's fleet of mini-robots.

January 16 Supercold Sunday

If you think it's cold outside, it'll be even colder indoors thanks to liquid nitrogen. Prepare to be amazed, as this liquefied air (at -320°F!) causes metal to shrink and ceramics to super-conduct, unleashes the legendary "SudSplosion," and helps us concoct delicious liquid nitrogen ice cream.

February 20 Space Sunday

Go where no one has gone before and explore the hazards of space travel, from micro-meteors to the harsh properties of the vacuum beyond Earth's atmosphere. Launch your own mini-rockets, learn to find constellations, and look for sunspots (weather permitting.)

March 20 Bird Sunday

Meet raptor rehabilitator Tom Ricardi and his live birds of prey, including a bald eagle. Plus, meet members of the Connecticut Parrot Society and their colorful friends, build a feeder or house to bring birds into your own yard, and see an owl pellet dissection.



Sky Watchers

A Look at What's Happening in the Night Sky from the Travelers Science Dome

Total Lunar Eclipse Visible from Connecticut

There are few happenings in the night sky as mysterious and beautiful as a lunar eclipse. Since ancient times, people have tried to understand why the Moon would vanish from the sky every few years. Some cultures believed that eclipses were omens of evil, while others used science to try and predict them.

As the Sun shines on the Earth, the Earth makes a shadow. The Earth's shadow usually misses the Moon, because of the Moon's slanted path. At least twice per year, the Moon travels through the shadow of the Earth. While the Moon is in the Earth's shadow, the sunlight is filtered through it, and the Moon appears dark for a few hours. During a lunar eclipse, the Moon can look red, brown, orange, or yellow. The color is caused by dust in our atmosphere.



When a lunar eclipse happens, not everyone in the world can see it. Each lunar eclipse can only be seen by about half of the world at a time. Also, each time an eclipse happens, it happens above a different part of the Earth. From here in Connecticut, we don't always see a lunar eclipse when it's happening. Here, we see at least part of a lunar eclipse every few years.

On December 21, 2010 between 12:00 am and 6:00 am, we will see the whole Moon covered by Earth's shadow. Join us in the Museum courtyard for the Lunar Eclipse Breakfast to watch the eclipse and to view the eclipsed moon through our telescopes.

Nature Explorers

Tips for Exploring in Your Own Backyard from Roaring Brook Nature Center

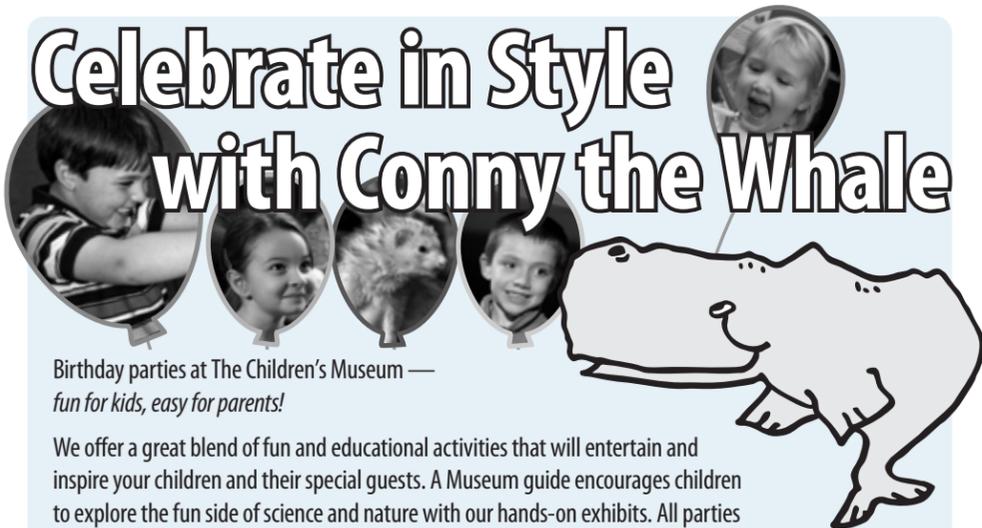
There is a perception that nature shuts down in December and one's time is best spent in the house keeping warm until spring. After all, there is little to see outside other than snow and ice. Nothing could be further from the truth and, if you are dressed appropriately, winter can be a wonderful time to explore the outdoors.

While some animals hibernate, the only mammals here in Connecticut that are true hibernators are woodchucks, certain bats, and two species of jumping mice. Many others are active throughout the winter. Even bears will occasionally come out of their dens for a short winter stroll. Reptiles and amphibians will "brumate," the reptilian version of hibernation, but scientists have recently discovered that wood frogs actually crawl beneath the leaves and, as the temperature drops, they freeze like an ice cube. When the temperature rises, they thaw out and go about their business.

Many birds remain here during the winter, including some that used to migrate. The greater Hartford area is now home to thousands of Canada Geese that remain throughout the winter. Robins that nest in our area fly south, but many from farther north spend their winters in Connecticut. Unable to find worms, these hardy winter robins eat berries and old apples left on the trees. Even insects can be found during winter. Snow fleas, small wingless insects that feed in the leaf litter, can be found hopping on the snow on warmer sunny winter days. Stone flies — insects that spend the first part of their lives in water — emerge and crawl along the banks of brooks. Even small spiders can be seen scuttling across the snow.

This winter, bundle up and head for the trail to see what you can find. Check the Roaring Brook Nature Center calendar in this newsletter for programs that will help you to make exciting winter discoveries.

Celebrate in Style with Conny the Whale



Birthday parties at The Children's Museum — fun for kids, easy for parents!

We offer a great blend of fun and educational activities that will entertain and inspire your children and their special guests. A Museum guide encourages children to explore the fun side of science and nature with our hands-on exhibits. All parties include a special visit from one of our Wildlife Sanctuary critters, a full-dome show in the Travelers Science Dome planetarium, and a private party room to honor your child's special day.

Customize your party to include a science or craft activity for guests to remember their experience. Our newest party, "Under the Sea," will take children "down below" where they will learn about sea life, get to know Conny the Whale, and make an ocean-themed craft. "Fossil Fun" explores the prehistoric age and offers a take-home fossil activity. For our youngest explorers, a "Little Hands" party is sure to excite and entertain. Just for them, we offer an animal craft and related story.

Visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org for more information and call us at 860.231.2830 x44 to book your child's party today.

Overnights Offer After-Hours Adventures

We know you're never ready to leave The Children's Museum when the time comes. Now you don't have to! Spend the night instead. Let The Children's Museum organize a *Stuck on Science* Overnight, providing a fun and welcoming environment for scouts and youth groups that encourages science through exploration. Spending the night at the Museum can be a "bonding" trip, an end-of-the-year celebration, or just plain fun.

Overnights run on selected Fridays and Saturdays, January through May. Imagine roaming the exhibit halls after everyone else has gone home, viewing an amazing digital planetarium show, and falling asleep among our many exhibits. We can arrange a private Overnight for groups of 100 or more. If your group is smaller you'll join other groups exploring everything the Museum has to offer. Two hands-on science workshops dealing with the *sticky* world of science — magnets, air pressure, static electricity, slime, amphibians, and reptiles — are sure to captivate. A museum-wide scavenger hunt will have you searching our nooks and crannies. It will be a night to remember!

If your scout group isn't quite ready for an overnight experience, you can still explore the Museum after hours on February 18 and April 8 from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. These special Scouting Around evenings of discoveries and investigations are devoted especially to scouts and include astounding science demonstrations you won't want to miss.

Our registration staff is eager to give you all the details on our group programs. You can contact them at 860.231.2830 x44, e-mail Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org, or visit our website to learn more.

All About Animals

Get to Know Our Friends in the Wildlife Sanctuary

The Chinchillas

Roma, Willow, and Pat

The museum is home to three chinchillas. Pat, the female, was born at the Museum in 2001. Roma and Willow were both former pets who arrived at the Museum in 2004 and 2005 respectively.

Pat lives by herself in Critter Crossing, which is her preference. Typically, chinchillas live together in the Wildlife Sanctuary. Staff tried having Pat room with Willow and Roma each on separate occasions. Both times, she chased, bit, and ripped out the fur of the other chinchilla. Apparently, she enjoys living alone. Willow and Roma were introduced and they have been living together happily ever since.



Roma

Chinchillas are a type of rodent from the Andes Mountains of South America. They have very soft, thick fur to keep them warm in the harsh climate. Unfortunately, humans like the fur, too. One species of chinchilla was hunted to extinction and the other two to very low numbers. They are now protected as endangered species but they continue to be hunted illegally.

Chinchillas are nocturnal and live in colonies called herds. They are herbivores, eating a variety of grasses, seeds, and fruits. Unlike most rodents, the chinchilla has a very long gestation period and their babies are born fully furred. They can live about 10 years in captivity but they need large, vertical spaces to jump and get exercise and solid objects to chew to keep their teeth filed down.

Calendar of Events

Cool Science Fun All Winter Long

To register for the programs you see here (unless otherwise noted), call **860.231.2830 x44** or e-mail Events@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Online registration is also available for many of our events and programs. Check our website at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Member prices are for The Children's Museum/Roaring Brook Nature Center members. All prices are per person.

Laser Holiday Solstice Festival

Friday, December 17 to Sunday, December 19

5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

For three consecutive nights, The Children's Museum will hold a family holiday open house. Join us for a laser show featuring Christmas classics, seasonal crafts, a Yule Log, and light refreshments. Choose a 5:30 pm or 6:30 pm laser show when registering. Remember to visit all your favorite exhibits while you're here! **Free** for members, \$5 for members of reciprocal museums, \$11 for non-members. Pre-registration is required.

Evening Laser Shows

These late evening programs are suitable for adults and children older than 13. Tickets are \$8 for members, \$9 for non-members. See both programs in one night for \$14 for members, \$16 for non-members.

Friday, December 17

8:00 pm **Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon**, one of our most popular laser programs, includes the entire album.

9:00 pm **Pink Floyd's The Wall** includes all of the songs from the 1979, best-selling album.

Saturday, December 18

8:00 pm **Laser Green Day** is a retrospective of the band's greatest hits.

9:00 pm **Laser Guitar Hero**: Watch as your favorite Guitar Hero songs are set to laser images.

Sunday, December 19 Robo Sunday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Face the towering security robot called Axeous, meet the high school scientists of the FIRST Robotics League, enter the Circuitry Lab, and take command of the Museum's fleet of mini-robots.

Free with general admission

Tuesday, December 21

Lunar Eclipse Breakfast

2:30 am to 5:30 am

Lunar eclipses occur at least twice a year, but we will not see another one this well until 2015. Wake up early and join us for coffee and muffins in the museum courtyard as we watch the best lunar eclipse of the decade. We'll light the fire to keep warm, and if the weather doesn't cooperate, we'll watch a Webcast from inside the planetarium dome. \$5 for members, \$7 for non-members.

Friday, December 31 Countdown to Noon

10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Make a party hat and a noisemaker and countdown to the New Year with us. At noon we'll celebrate with a bubbly toast. **Free** with general admission.

Sunday, January 16 Supercold Sunday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

If you think it's cold outside, it'll be even colder indoors thanks to liquid nitrogen. Prepare to be amazed, as this liquefied air (at -320°F!) causes metal to shrink and ceramics to super-conduct, unleashes the legendary "SudSplosion," and helps us concoct delicious liquid nitrogen ice cream. **Free** with general admission.

Tuesday, January 18 HomeSchool Day

We invite children who are homeschooled to visit the Museum, tour our exhibits and take part in classroom and planetarium programs appropriate for children ages five to 13. Call or visit our website to learn more about pricing and program schedules. Another HomeSchool Day will be held on March 9.

Friday, January 21

Full Moon Hike at Roaring Brook

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Dress warmly as we'll head to the open field for some moon gazing, astronomy and listening for great horned owls. The hike will be followed by hot cider and cookies in the Nature Center auditorium. This program is not geared for young children and participants should dress for cold evening temperatures! Call the Nature Center at 860.693.0263 to register. \$5 for members, \$7 for non-members.

Saturday, February 5

Chinese New Year Celebration

6:00 pm to 9:00 pm

We will be celebrating Chinese New Year in the Science Dome with traditional food, crafts, and stories. If the weather is clear, we will use our telescopes in the courtyard. \$7 for members, \$8 for non-members.

Sunday, February 20 Space Sunday

11:00 am to 4:00 pm

Go where no one has gone before and explore the hazards of space travel, from micro-meteorites to the harsh properties of the vacuum beyond Earth's atmosphere. Launch your own mini-rockets, learn to find constellations, and look for sunspots (weather permitting). **Free** with general admission.

Wednesday, February 23 Flight Day

11:00 am to 3:00 pm

This is a special day dedicated to flight-related activities and demonstrations. **Free** with general admission.

Preschool Vacation Program

Monday, December 27 to Friday, December 31

Where Do the Animals Go?

Children ages 3 1/2, 4, 5 and 6 will enjoy learning about animal friends in winter.

This half-day program runs from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm. To register, call the Preschool at 860.523.7449.

The Children's Museum's Hours of Admission

Tuesday - Saturday 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Sunday 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The Museum is **open** on Monday, December 27; New Year's Day, January 1;

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 17; and President's Day, February 21.

The Museum is closed on Christmas Day, December 25, and closes at 1:00 pm on December 24.

Invaders of Mars is Here

Our newest show is now playing in the Travelers Science Dome.

Check our website for showtimes.

Vacation Science Camp

Join us for action-packed days of science investigation, crafts, games, Museum exploration, astronomy activities, up-close animal encounters, and more.

For more information, visit www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

9:00 am to 4:00 pm • For children in grades 1 to 5

\$60/day for members • \$70/day for non-members

Pre-registration is required. Ask about our multiple day discounts available during December and February vacation weeks.

December Vacation Week

Monday, December 27 Science in the Fast Lane

Experience fast and furious fun. From roller coasters to dragsters, we'll race to the finish line on this day that never stays still.

Tuesday, December 28 Starstruck

The stars are yours as you learn the legends behind the constellations and the science that makes the night sky so amazing.

Wednesday, December 29 Scales & Tails

Love animals? Then you're in for a treat as you discover all about our furry, feathered, and scaly friends.

Thursday, December 30 Mad Scientists

Protective goggles required! Count on us to show you the weirder side of science as we conduct crazy experiments.

Friday, December 31 Get Zapped

No experience is necessary to start the flow of bright ideas. Delve into circuitry and electricity as you experiment with motors, lights, switches, and buzzers.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 17 Down and Dirty Science

Icky experiments, disgusting demonstrations, stomach-churning science — we'll do it all as we examine the truly gross side of science.

February Vacation Week

Friday, February 18 Clayful Concoctions

Dive into clay, dough, and polymers. Test strength and stretchiness to determine which substances you "knead" to form and shape artful creations.

Monday, February 21 Treasure Hunters

Discover the secrets of pirates' buried pasts. Learn about the tools they used and the techniques of these ancient treasure hunters.

Tuesday, February 22 Scope it Out

Explore different ways to see the world through stethoscopes, periscopes, and aquascopes. Build and then use them to learn about their amazing abilities.

Wednesday, February 23 Critter Café

Learn about the varied foods that animals eat and why. Create a nutritious menu for different animals. Dig into an owl pellet to see what an owl had for lunch.

Thursday, February 24

Superhero Science

Superheroes and science unite as you uncover superhero secrets and try your hand at the tricks of the trade.

Friday, February 25

The Toy Factory

Satisfy your playful curiosity as we dissect and create toys. Learn the science of how your favorite playthings work.

Go to www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org to connect with us on **Facebook**.



Winter 2010 Programs

Roaring Brook Nature Center
70 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019
860.693.0263 www.roaringbrook.org

Nature Center Hours

Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm; Sunday, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.
Trails through Werner's Woods are open daily from dawn until dusk.
All costs are per person unless stated otherwise.

ROARING
BROOK
NATURE
CENTER



BIRTHDAY PARTY OPPORTUNITIES

The Nature Center offers birthday parties on Saturdays from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm and from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, and on selected weekday afternoons throughout the year. Parties include a live animal demonstration, nature walk, and use of our auditorium for the party. The cost of a party is \$125 for members and \$150 for non-members. Call the Nature Center for additional information.

SCOUT PROGRAMS

Leaders of Daisies, Brownies, Junior Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts will find that numerous badge requirements may be fulfilled with a visit to the Nature Center. Winter programs include the Frosty Fun badge for Juniors. Call the Nature Center for additional details.

MID-WINTER BIRDSEED SALE

Saturday, January 22

For information on the birdseed sale, or to receive an order form, e-mail us at rbnc@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org or call the Nature Center.

DISCOVERY DAYS PROGRAMS

Discovery Days, the Nature Center's enrichment series for children in preschool and in grades K to 3, continues through the winter season with a brand new series of programs. The cost of each four-week session is \$40 for members and \$50 for non-members. Discounts are extended to families with multiple children attending during the same time period. Registration is now open for the following winter programs:

Exploring Together for Ages 3 to 4

This series introduces preschool children accompanied by parents to seasonal changes in the natural world and gives parent (or grandparent) and child an opportunity to learn together. A younger sibling may attend for a \$10 discount; there is no charge for siblings under age 2. Portions of the program are held outdoors, so please dress accordingly.

January/February Sessions

Session I: Thursdays, 10:00 am to 11:00 am, January 20, 27; February 3, 10

Session II: Fridays 1:15 pm to 2:15 pm, January 21, 28; February 4, 11

March Sessions:

Session III: Thursdays 10:00 am to 11:00 am, March 3, 10, 17, 24

Session IV: Fridays 1:15 to 2:15 pm, March 4, 11, 18, 25

Ages 4 to 5

Programs for children in kindergarten and kindergarten readiness programs are held on Thursday mornings from 10:00 am to 11:00 am and afternoons from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm. These programs do not include parental participation.

Tales & Trails

January 20, 27; February 3, 10

Through stories and outdoor exploration, find out what animals do and where they go in winter.

Maple Sugar Time

March 3, 10, 17, 24

March is sometimes called the "fifth season." We don't know what the weather or the wildlife is up to at this time of year. And what are those funny looking buckets hanging off the trees?

Grades 1 to 3

Enrichment programs for elementary-school-age youngsters meet Thursday afternoons from 3:45 pm to 5:00 pm.

Winter Survival

January 20, 27; February 3, 10

Plants and animals act differently depending upon how much snow falls in winter. How do animals survive the cold here in Connecticut?

On the Lookout for Spring

March 3, 10, 17, 24

Although the calendar still reads winter and the days can be frigid, animals are already thinking about winter's end. Look and listen for signs that spring is not far off.

Pre-registration with payment is required for vacation week programs. Participants should bring a snack and dress for the outdoors in winter. Call the Nature Center for additional information.

DECEMBER VACATION WEEK December 27 to 31

Grades K to 4

Mon. to Fri., 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

The cost is \$100 for members, \$120 for non-members, *or* a daily rate of \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members.

A Little Naturalist's Winter - Grades K to 1

The forest may seem quiet, but there is much going on behind the scenes. While the days are short and the temperatures low, we'll take to the outdoors to discover hidden animal signs in the forest and field.

The Wild Side of Winter - Grades 2 to 4

We may not have penguins or polar bears, but, with the right kind of wind and weather, Connecticut can have a pretty wild winter. What determines our weather and what must plants, animals and people do to get through the winter season?

Grades 5 to 8

Mon., Tues., Wed., Fri., 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Thurs., 9:00 am to 3:30 pm

The cost is \$110 for members, \$125 for non-members, *or* a daily rate of \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members

Winter Survival

How do animals stay active and find food in the winter woods? What can we learn from the animals to improve our own survival skills. This program includes an all-day field trip to the beach in winter. The Thursday field trip is not eligible for single-day enrollment.

FEBRUARY VACATION WEEK February 22 to 25

Grades K to 5

Tues. to Fri., 9:00 am to 12:00 pm

The cost is \$85 for members, \$100 for non-members *or* a daily rate of \$30 for members, \$35 for non-members

February Nature Carnival

Fun with snow and ice, animal tracking, and, depending upon weather conditions, snowshoeing and maple sugaring will be part of this four-day vacation program.

ADVENTURE STORY TIME

January 24, February 28

1:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Adults and children ages 2 to 5 can participate in a shared story with a craft and short walk. Children must be accompanied by adults. There is a charge of \$2/child with a maximum \$5/family. Pre-registration is required.

**Save the Date
Tuesday, April 5**

Roaring Brook Nature Center
Fundraiser
at The Flatbread Company
in The Shoppes
at Farmington Valley

WEEKEND EVENTS

January Bird Walk

Saturday, January 1

9:30 am to 11:30 am

Dress for winter weather conditions as we start the New Year in search of as many bird species as we can find on the first day of the New Year. This program is not geared for younger children. The cost is \$3 for members, \$5 for non-members. Pre-registration is requested, but walk-ins are welcome.

Full Moon Hike

Friday, January 21

7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

Dress warmly as we'll head to the open field for some moongazing, astronomy, and listening for great horned owls, followed by hot cider and cookies in the Nature Center auditorium. This program is not geared for young children and participants should dress for cold evening temperatures. The cost is \$5 for members, \$7 for non-members. Pre-registration is required.

The Essence of the Orient – Wild Places & Unique Cultures Friday, January 28

7:30 pm

Enjoy an evening of learning about the cultural diversity, natural history, and amazing landscapes of Taiwan and China from Taiwanese native Szu-ting Yi and former Nature Center staff member David Anderson. And, yes, there will be pandas (not live ones). The cost is \$4 for members, \$5 for non-members.

Goin' On A Bear Hunt

Sunday, January 30

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Do bears really hibernate? Will the Groundhog really see his shadow on Tuesday? Walk gently through the forest to uncover the mysteries of wildlife habits in mid-winter. The cost is \$4/adult and \$2/child for members, \$6/adult and \$3/child for non-members. Pre-registration is not required.

Family Winter Survival

Saturday, February 12

2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

What do you do if you get lost in the woods in winter? Learn what basic supplies you may need to survive a night outdoors. The program includes fire-building and shelter construction. Dress for winter weather; this program is geared for children under age 9. The cost is \$5 for members (\$15 max per family), \$6 for non-members (\$18 max per family).

Under The Sea

Sunday, February 13

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Using shadow boxes, photographs and diving equipment, Avon resident Dick Wells will provide a respite from winter as he talks about life under the sea. This program is free with Nature Center admission.

Maple Sugaring in Your Own Backyard

Sunday, March 6

2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Our annual demonstration teaches you how to make maple syrup. We'll cover the entire process from identifying the tree to the best part – tasting the final product. The cost is \$4/adult and \$2/child for members, \$6/adult and \$3/child for non-members. Pre-registration is not required.

Drumming About You

Sunday, March 20

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

Start the spring season with the bang of a drum as Bob Bloom returns to our stage for an interactive drumming concert—fun for all ages. 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 for members, \$9 for non-members.

the children's museum

950 Trout Brook Drive
West Hartford, CT 06119-1437

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Where Science and Nature Are Fun

Visit us online at www.TheChildrensMuseumCT.org to register for programs, find us on Facebook, see our event and show schedule, learn about our animals and more.

Holiday Gift Wrap Fundraisers Support The Children's Museum

Staff and volunteers from The Children's Museum will be gift wrapping your purchases at the following stores this holiday season. Tell your friends and mark your calendars to shop on these dates and stop by the wrapping station to support the Museum!

Barnes & Noble at Blue Back Square

Friday, December 17, 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm Donations of any amount are accepted for wrapping.

Macy's at Westfarms Mall

Saturday December 11, 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm \$5 for small gifts, \$8 for large gifts.

The Spirit of Giving

Remember to include The Children's Museum in your end-of-year gift-giving plans.

A contribution to our Annual Fund, or a gift in memory or in honor of a loved one, will be put to use immediately at the museum, providing support for the exhibits, animals, programs — **everything** you love at The Children's Museum!

For more information, contact the Development Office at 860.231.2830 x48 or e-mail kberube@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org. To make a donation, visit our website (Support TCM, Giving link), or use the gift envelope included in this newsletter to mail your donation directly to:

The Children's Museum, Development Office

950 Trout Brook Drive
West Hartford, CT 06119-1437

All of us at The Children's Museum extend our heartfelt thanks to the hundreds of individuals and institutions who make contributions to our programs, exhibits, and operations. Thank you for understanding that ticket sales and program fees do not cover the entire cost of running the Museum, and that we rely on support from the community to make up the rest.

Together, we can continue to inspire children about science, nature, and the world around them!

Save the Date for A Child's World Saturday, May 7, 2011

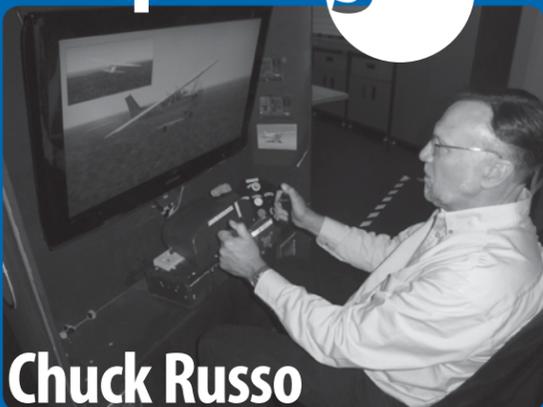
Our Annual Gala Fundraiser will be held on May 7th at Tumble Brook Country Club. Plans are already underway for a festive evening.

If you would like to join the planning committee or would like information, including corporate sponsor opportunities, please contact our Development Office at 860.231.2830 x23 or e-mail rdeberry@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.



Photo by Eric Wallis Photography

Volunteer Spotlight



Chuck Russo

Volunteer Opportunities

The holiday season is fast approaching and there are many fun upcoming events at the museum. If you would like to help out with any of our special events or are interested in volunteering, please contact Jennifer Parker at 860.231.2830 x38 or jparker@TheChildrensMuseumCT.org.

Chuck Russo has been volunteering at The Children's Museum for almost a year. A lifelong West Hartford resident, Chuck retired from Northeast Utilities in 2008 after 36 years as an Electrical Engineer.

Chuck came to us just as we were starting our new Flight Simulator project and was instrumental in making the overall project a great success. "Chuck was a huge help on the electronic side of things by helping us develop the user interface and our customized button control system," says Pete Claffey, Director of Facilities and Exhibits at the Museum. "Chuck put in a lot of hours and has shown tremendous patience and inventiveness putting up with the constant changes and modifications required during the various phases of the project," added Pete.

"Chuck saved us a ton of man hours doing all the necessary testing and tweaking of the Flight Sims before we opened them to the public," said IT Director Tom Anderson.

"One of the biggest challenges is operating with a very limited pool of resources, but trying to meet tight deadlines and often lofty goals," said Chuck. "I think the end result is pretty gratifying and seeing the kids' delight when they use the Sims is its own reward. Our audience is pretty brutal on the equipment though, so it does require constant upkeep."

Chuck continues to work on Museum exhibits and is currently assisting with the upcoming Mars exhibit due to open next year.

Why did you want to volunteer at The Children's Museum?

As a child, The Children's Museum sparked my interest in science and nature. It was always an exciting, interesting place to visit. I wanted to be a part of the support staff to help keep the Museum operating for the enjoyment and stimulation of our future generations of children.

Why would you encourage others to volunteer?

It is a wonderful, fulfilling way to give back to the community and a rewarding experience, personally. Also, visiting with the animals is fun.

What would people be surprised to find out about you?

I raised and bred dairy goats, geese and ducks for four years in the 1970s.

Best advice you have ever been given?

Be true to yourself.

Do you have any regrets?

Not spending the time early on to explore different careers. I could have discovered the one that I was most passionate about. And of course, I wish I had become involved with The Children's Museum sooner!