



GENERAL NEWS



April 2022

Dreaming of a STEM Summer

It feels like summer already, and the Science Center team has been working all winter to dream up great STEM fun for the upcoming season! From celebrating sharks to celebrating space, there is a lot of fun science happening this summer at the Children's Science Center Lab and in our community outreach programs.



As you begin to plan your family's summer, be sure and check out the [calendar of events](#) at the Lab. We have some amazing programs planned, including our annual citizen science project, Shark Month, First Images from the James Webb Space Telescope event, and much more. Stay tuned for more information and links to register for these unique opportunities!

Summer is the perfect time for meaningful and fun learning experiences, as a family or [as a camper](#). We're celebrating our STEM-tastic 7th Birthday at the Lab this June, and we're sure this is going to be the best one yet!

Sincerely,

Nene Spivy
Executive Director

A Day of Innovation with Benjamin Franklin

Meet a Famous Inventor

Hosted in partnership with [WETA](#), guests will explore the incredible inventions of Benjamin Franklin with special activities, electrifying demonstrations, and a visit from Ben himself! This event will take place during timed-entry sessions at 10 am and 2 pm. Don't miss this unique and exciting opportunity to engage with an important pioneer in science!



Celebrate Earth Day with Us! Two Events to Choose From

We are celebrating our beautiful Earth with two special events you won't want to miss.

Join us at the Lab to celebrate our planet on Saturday, April 23, 2022. Included with your timed-entry admission, there will be hands-on activities and opportunities to learn more about what plants need to survive and thrive. Build your very own DIY greenhouse, and learn all about the science of soil!

On Sunday, April 24, 2022, join the Youth Advisory Board of the Children's Science Center Lab for a fun-filled, outdoor celebration at [Loudoun Water](#) in Ashburn. Two free Earth Day Extravaganza sessions are offered on April 24 from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm and from 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm. Although attendance is free, registration is required to attend. Hands-on activities, speakers, hiking, and more are part of this event all about Earth. Registration is limited to the first 100 attendees per session, so register soon!



Earth Day Celebrations

Saturday, April 23

AT THE LAB:

special activities included with Timed Entry

Sunday, April 24

AT LOUDOUN WATER:

special activities FREE event must preregister

 **children's science center™** | **LAB**

Saturday, April 23 at the Lab

Sunday, April 24 at Loudoun Water

Children's Science Center Lab Presents at Virginia Association of Museums Conference

The Children's Science Center Lab joined Lisa Kimball, Chief Executive Officer at [The Arc of Loudoun](#), and Scott Cryer, Associate Vice President and Principal at [HGA](#), to present on accessibility in the museum industry at the Virginia Association of Museums Annual Conference in early March.

In the presentation, "Prioritizing Museum Accessibility: Challenges and Opportunities," speakers covered best practices for accessibility and shared a case study about the Children's Science Center Lab's partnership with the Arc of Loudoun, an organization that serves people with disabilities and their families. The key takeaways from the presentation were to expand the definition of accessibility and the importance of working with community partners to create accessible programming.



Katie Jones, Project Director for the Northern Virginia Science Center, believes community partnerships can be a powerful tool in making museum programming accessible to a wide range of audiences.

"At the Lab, we use our people and our staff to create more accessible programming in our space, and I think this comes down to the fact that we're really a people-oriented institution," she said. "Although we are physically accessible, we have the Experiment Bar at wheelchair height, for example, we broaden our definition of accessibility and be more accessible by working with community partners to figure out what the needs are for audiences with accessibility needs that you might not be able to see; that aren't visible to us."

Noelle Russell, a STEM Educator at the Lab, presented about her work with The Arc of Loudoun and shared ways that the Lab collaborated with the organization to develop accessible programming. Students who attend the Aurora School, founded by parents in cooperation with the Arc of Loudoun, participated in the STEM Exploration Club, where they worked with the Lab's STEM educators and engaged in specially-designed activities. "Every step of the way, during the programming and while creating the programming, we really collaborated," Noelle said. "We didn't just create a program and then invite their students to attend. We worked with the staff at the Aurora School every step of the way and asked them questions and for their feedback on what we were doing."

Katie said being receptive to feedback from community partners, and understanding that accessibility is an ongoing process is important to this kind of community work. "Listen to your community partners and community and communicate with all of those people the best that you can, knowing that for every one thing that you're able to do, there are 12 things that you're not doing, and that's okay, as long as you know what those things are and you're honest with your patrons and staff," she said.

Overall, making programs more accessible benefits every guest who walks through the door.

"Many things we put in place to be more accessible don't just make a better program for people with disabilities, they make a better program for everyone," Noelle said.

The Virginia Association Museums Conference was held last month in Richmond and is an annual conference to bring museum professionals together to unite the museum community.

Camp Season is Here!



Summer 2022 Camps



Summer Camp is Only 9 Weeks Away Reserve Your Spot Now!

Our summer week-long camps are designed for children in grades 1-5.

With five cool themes to choose from, including 3D printing, slimy science, robotics, and more. The cost is \$395 per week.

The Lab is closed to the public for all camp sessions, so campers will have the whole Lab to themselves.

Camps are filling up fast. Don't wait to register!

[Learn More](#)

Donor Spotlight *AWS InCommunities*

Thanks to [AWS InCommunities](#) for their generous sponsorship of the newest exhibit at the Children's Science Center Lab, the 3D Printer Experience. Unveiled in February to kick off National Engineers Week, this interactive experience shares a rotating story of the possibilities 3D printing technology has in everyday life.

Currently, the 3D Printer Experience, sponsored by AWS InCommunities, is modeling home building and showcases the very first owner-occupied 3D printed home built last December by Alquist 3D in partnership with Habitat for Humanity. The home is located in Williamsburg, VA. Through this sponsorship, the Science Center's team will host 3D virtual workshops, expand their 3D printer tools and software, including TinkerCad, and implement three different stories throughout the year related to 3D printing. Also planned are two-week-long summer camp sessions all about 3D printing and design. The spring break single-day camp sold out before the session. Learn more about summer camps at childsci.org/camps. To visit this new exhibit and purchase tickets to the Lab, visit childsci.org/tickets.



Wilberte Paul, Community Engagement Manager, AWS InCommunities, with Nene Spivy, Executive Director

The Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation is grateful to *AWS InCommunities* for their contribution to providing the 3D Printer Experience, which brings exciting opportunities to connect young scientists with technology by bridging the gap between the physical and the digital worlds.

Try It At Home
Tweak Your Beak

The birds have been chirping! It's spring! Did you know that bird beaks come in all shapes, sizes, and colors? And did you know that beaks are specially designed to work best for what a bird eats?

In this experiment, you will learn all about the different kinds of bird beaks, and how they work, by constructing them yourself!



Try It At Home!

The Northern Virginia Science Center Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that operates the Children's Science Center Lab at Fair Oaks Mall and STEM programs traveling to schools and other community venues across the region.

Donate