



**children's
science center**

EXPLORE. CREATE. INSPIRE.

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**BIG BOOST FOR STEM EDUCATION IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA:
CHILDREN'S SCIENCE CENTER ANNOUNCES SITES AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS**

Herndon, Virginia – Today, the Children's Science Center announced sites and phased development plans for a 5,400-square-foot first operating site to be located at Fair Oaks Mall, in Fairfax, Virginia and a 53,000-square-foot world-class children's science center to be located at the Kincora development in Dulles, Virginia. These two hands-on, interactive STEM-based facilities (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) will be the first of their kind in Northern Virginia and will fill a much-needed gap in an area where STEM disciplines are essential to the local economy and workforce, including health care, the environment, transportation, energy and national security.

"Today, we are putting a stake in the ground...actually two! After many years of searching for a suitable home, we have achieved our long-time goal to be located within the Dulles region, where families and high-tech industry partners are plentiful, and where we can offer a regional resource serving multiple jurisdictions in Northern Virginia and beyond," said Nene Spivy, Children's Science Center Executive Director.

Over 50 percent of the new jobs in our region in the next decade will require STEM skills. National studies show marked declines in interest in STEM occur as early as 5th grade and more severely by 8th grade. Building children's interest and aptitude early is essential to expanding the pipeline that will meet our future workforce needs. Area employers are most affected by this gap between interest and workforce needs.

Informal learning outside of school, as in children's museums and science centers, improves children's interest, attitudes and competencies in STEM subjects. A recent Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) study shows that children who visit museums during kindergarten had higher achievement scores in reading, math, and science than those who did not.

The Children's Science Center understands that science learning is much more than STEM and workforce issues. Children understand that science is the joy of exploration, the thrill of discovery and the pride of creation. It invites children to imagine worlds—and lives—they'd never thought possible, and to reimagine their own potential.

"For the children from disadvantaged backgrounds—including the 30 percent in the Northern Virginia region who qualify for free and reduced lunch—the possibilities of a career in science, technology, engineering or math can feel especially out of reach," said Spivy, "Now, we can inspire children whose families and schools simply can't afford to travel to Richmond or Baltimore for such museum experiences."

Northern Virginia is consistently ranked one of the top metro areas in the country for science and technology employment, rivaling Silicon Valley, Austin, and Boston, each having multiple well-regarded museums for children. Although Virginia is home to seven children's museums, none serve Northern Virginia—making us the largest metropolitan area in the nation that lacks a dedicated children's museum.

Building on Success – Phases of Growth

In 2013, the Children's Science Center's Museum Without Walls served nearly 15,000 visitors at over 60 venues, including schools, libraries, museums, and other locations across the region, and has grown by over 400 percent in the past three years. Slated to open in mid-2015, Phase II, The Lab, anticipates serving more than 60,000 visitors annually and will include Exploration Stations, an Experiment Bar, a tinkering area, and Budding Scientist areas for toddler/preschool visitors. The Phase III full-scale museum, scheduled to open in 2019, anticipates more than 300,000 visitors each year, delivering innovative, hands-on STEM exhibits, content, and experiences. Working closely in partnership with our public and private school systems, state and local governments, business community, tourism entities and philanthropic community, the museum will offer a much-needed community resource to promote science literacy and develop innovative leaders for the next generation.

In April, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors showed their support for the project by authorizing a \$250,000 grant for the Children's Science Center to support the construction and first operating years of the full-scale museum.

"Even before we had identified our sites, the response from the community, including individuals, foundations, corporations, and government, has been very supportive and has fueled our growth. The recent financial support committed by Loudoun County is a clear sign that the community is ready for this project," said Spivy. "Everyone can be part of creating a legacy for our children and raising our next generations of innovators."

"Fairfax County - and I personally - have been very supportive of the establishment of a Children's Science Center. I look forward to seeing space take shape at Fair Oaks Mall," said Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. "It is a great, central location for the Northern Virginia community. Fairfax County will remain a strong partner with the Children's Science Center; our kids will be able to experience the scientific world in new and exciting ways and I welcome the Children's Science Center to Northern Virginia," said Bulova.

"I am extremely pleased that the Children's Science Center has selected Loudoun County for their flagship museum," said Scott York, Chairman of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. "The Children's Science Center will impact hundreds of thousands of young minds a year; teaching them that important subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics can be fun and helping keep the spark of STEM learning alive past the critical 8th grade level. Helping foster interest in learning is one of the most important investments we can make for our children's future," said York.

"I would also like to commend this Board of Supervisors for their ongoing support of a project that is in line with both our educational and economic development goals. The return on the investment made by the County will be broad and far-reaching. The Children's Science Center will be an excellent cultural, family, and educational asset to the county and the region and we look forward to our participation in the museum's success in the years to come," said York.

About The Children's Science Center

The Children's Science Center is an interactive museum for children being planned for the Dulles region of Northern Virginia that will offer hands-on exhibits, activities and programs focusing on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Currently in our first phase, Museum Without Walls, we bring hands-on science activities to thousands of children in our area, allowing us to fulfill our mission before our doors open, to instill a love of learning STEM in all children by providing unique opportunities to explore, create, and be inspired. Phase II is a 5,400-square-foot hands-on, interactive exploration center, called The Lab, located at the Fair Oaks Mall, followed by phase III, a 53,000-square-foot world-class children's science museum located at the Kincora development in Dulles, Virginia.

The Children's Science Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. The Children's Science Center is grateful for the support of its founding partner, the Junior League of Northern Virginia. Learn more: www.ChildSci.org. Follow us on Twitter [@ChildSci](https://twitter.com/ChildSci) and Facebook [/ChildrensScienceCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensScienceCenter).

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STATEMENTS FROM REGIONAL LEADERS REGARDING SITE SELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT

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The Honorable Scott York
Chairman
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

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The Honorable Sharon Bulova
Chairman
Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

"I am very excited to welcome the Children's Science Center to Loudoun County and the Broad Run District. Having this center in Loudoun fits in well with the Board of Supervisors' goal of making our county the best possible community to live, work and play. Additionally, this center will provide a northern anchor along the Route 28 corridor for tourism in Loudoun County."

The Honorable Shawn Williams
Vice Chairman and Broad Run District Supervisor
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

"The Children's Science Center will be the Crown Jewel of Loudoun's already vibrant youth-focused recreation and education asset base. Loudoun families are highly educated and focused on STEM learning opportunities for their children. The Children's Science Center will further augment the educational needs of our children while also being an excellent draw for visitors as well. Significant educational and economic development benefits will accrue as a result of our cooperative and successful efforts to bring the Children's Science Center to Loudoun."

Ralph Buona
Ashburn District Supervisor
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors

“Just as Northern Virginia is leading the way in STEM-related education and employment, we’re also leading the way in providing math and science learning opportunities for our students. And while we’re building curiosity, we’re also building community. The Children’s Science Center fills what was a significant gap by encouraging students to explore and innovate from a young age.”

The Honorable Tag Greason
Member, Virginia House of Delegates, 32nd District

"We all know how important STEM education is to ensure that our kids can compete for the best jobs of this century. And the Washington DC region needs more future scientists and engineers than any other. Yet, for too long, Northern Virginia remained the largest metropolitan area in our nation that did not have a children’s museum or a science center. Today, I am very excited and proud to join the Children’s Science Center to announce that a physical site for the Center will be located right here in the 35th House District that I have the honor of representing. With this facility, the Children’s Science Center will play an even more significant role in promoting STEM education for our future leaders. I want to congratulate executive director Nene Spivy and her staff and board members, and everyone who worked so hard to make today’s great news possible."

The Honorable Mark L. Keam
Member, Virginia House of Delegates, 35th District

“This is a significant step forward in helping our young children explore and embrace a passion for science, technology, engineering, and math. We fully support the creation of the Lab and science center, which will provide unique opportunities for hands-on, experiential learning that is the foundation of 21st century skills.”

The Honorable Ilryong Moon
Chairman
Fairfax County School Board

"We are extremely excited to welcome the Children's Science Center to Kincora. This announcement is the result of a lot of hard work on behalf of the Children’s Science Center, Loudoun County staff and many other stakeholders, and would not be possible without the support of our Board of Supervisors. The Children's Science Center focuses on educating children in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; four foundations of Loudoun’s cutting-edge, technology driven economy."

Buddy Rizer
Director for Economic Development
Loudoun County

“As a Loudoun resident, a member of the business community, and a parent, I could not be more pleased to welcome the Children’s Science Center to our County. This will be a great fit for our dynamic and growing community, as well as a draw for families from the greater DC area and beyond. I certainly look forward to helping the Children’s Science Center leverage all the great resources that Loudoun has to offer as we continue to make our County a world class community.”

Scott M. Hamberger
CEO and President, Integrus Holdings, Inc.
Chairman, Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

“We are thrilled the Children’s Science Center has chosen to make its home in Loudoun County. The science center will be an outstanding addition to the county and its estimated 300,000 yearly visitors will benefit Loudoun County hotels, restaurants, attractions, and retail businesses, creating a strong economic benefit. This, indeed, is a very exciting announcement.”

Beth Erickson
Acting President and CEO
Visit Loudoun

“The Children’s Science Center’s decision to select Loudoun County as the permanent location for this prestigious new educational resource is great news for both the County and the Children’s Science Center. Loudoun boasts many unique and world-class scientific assets. The County boasts the nation’s leading data center cluster, hosting 70% of the world’s Internet traffic. Loudoun also is home for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s world-renowned Janelia Farm Research Campus and many of America’s top IT, telecom and cyber-security firms. These and many other premier scientific and technological resources will offer the Children’s Science Center’s access to the resources that will allow it to become yet another world-class asset in Loudoun County.”

Tony Howard
President and CEO
Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce

“We have followed the course of the Children’s Science Center from its beginnings and are so pleased to see it so well positioned today. With our region’s push for students to pursue STEM-related careers, a science center such as this is has an important role in building that fundamental interest for children. From such a seed can come great success in meeting the needs of tomorrow’s workforce.”

Eileen Curtis
President and CEO
Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce

“As the founding partner of the Children’s Science Center, the Junior League of Northern Virginia is proud of this significant milestone. Since the early days of this project, we have embraced the vision for creating this essential resource for the children in our community. We are so pleased to see the results of our early financial investment and thousands of our members’ volunteer hours in support of the Center’s education programs. We celebrate today with the Children’s Science Center, as it is a great day for children in our region.”

Candice Bennett
President
Junior League of Northern Virginia

“We are delighted to be able to bring the Children’s Science Center to Kincora for the children of Loudoun County and the region. The site will provide easy access and the Center will bring an educational component that is unique to the Washington, D.C. region.”

Michael Scott
Managing Member
Kincora

“Fair Oaks Mall is very excited to be adding the Children’s Science Center to our lineup of 200 stores and restaurants. This unique addition to the mall will provide a terrific new educational and entertaining offering to our millions of customers that come from across the Northern Virginia area.”

Robbie Stark
General Manager
Fair Oaks Mall
