

## **Connecticut Science Center Announces Major Expansion of Offerings that Align with New Curriculum Standards**

***“Science Forward” Initiative includes Exhibits, Learning Labs, and Programs to support Science Learning, Teaching, Workforce Development, and Tourism***

**Hartford, CT**— March 9, 2016 — The Connecticut Science Center announced today exciting plans for a major expansion of public offerings, enhanced programs, and student learning opportunities to profoundly change the way learners of all ages approach science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning experiences. The new offerings will enhance every floor of the Science Center, transforming the visitor experience from the moment of entry and through each exhibition gallery of Connecticut’s foremost informal STEM learning destination.

The initiative, named *Science Forward*, will include exhibit additions and augmentations, as well as adaptable classroom and laboratory venues to meet the growing statewide demand for accessible STEM learning spaces. This important work will roll out over the next five years and will be keyed to science curriculum needs and the state’s future economic and workforce requirements while also adding destination value to one of Connecticut’s leading tourism magnets. These exciting exhibit and facilities projects are integrated with an ambitious agenda of educational programs for schools and teachers, also under the *Science Forward* banner. Along with new and updated interactive programs at the Science Center, the team of STEM professionals and educators at the Science Center’s Mandell Academy for Teachers are working closely with the State Department of Education to train teachers, readying them to incorporate the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) into their everyday curricula and teaching practices. Concurrently, Science Center staff will develop tools for educators to use in their classrooms to highlight curriculum ties to *Science Forward* offerings that will enrich field trip experiences. The new exhibits and lab spaces, as well as improvements to existing exhibits, will support NGSS and reinforce the role of science and technology in everyday life.

Highlights of *Science Forward* include:

- A reimagined Science Alley, the Connecticut Science Center’s main atrium, showcasing the range of scientific exploration from the deep sea to outer space, which will capture the imagination of visitors with the breadth of scientific discovery
- An all-season Butterfly Conservatory and Greenhouse, which will draw families and tourists while serving as an active learning laboratory for students investigating plant and animal life cycles and ecosystems
- An expanded Engineering Lab, presenting hands-on activities and maker tasks as well as spaces for creative investigation and engineering design
- A new Earth and Human Impact exhibition, examining the way that humanity and our planet work in concert and in conflict, featuring exhibits on climate, earthquakes, volcanoes and more, and how computer science is helping to plan for the future

- A new DNA and Genomic Sciences gallery, featuring exhibits on crime scene investigation, heredity, and genomic medicine as well as a cutting-edge genomics lab
- A focused effort on increasing access to the Connecticut Science Center by reducing financial barriers for field trip and individual access while providing increased focus on populations where STEM professionals are underrepresented

“The leading-edge exhibits and programs *Science Forward* brings will enable the Science Center to offer more excitement and educational value—another great reason for families to live and learn in Connecticut. These spectacular offerings will appeal to members, our family audience, and the tourism market while supporting what teachers are doing in the classroom with materials and hands-on experiences that will bring science concepts to life,” said Matt Fleury, Connecticut Science Center President and CEO. “We are enormously grateful to the generous donors and the State of Connecticut for their continued support of the Science Center and our mission to inspire and educate the next generation of science and engineering talent.”

*Science Forward* has been supported by a wide range of corporations, foundations, and individuals, including a significant commitment from the Connecticut Science Center’s Board of Trustees, along with funding from the State of Connecticut, which led the creation of the Science Center starting in 2001.

“We know the importance of aligning offerings to help prepare our children today for the jobs of tomorrow. That’s why we continue to do it not just inside the classroom, but outside of it as well,” said Governor Dannel Malloy. “From aligning the Science Center and our public schools, to connecting our higher education institutions, to linking workforce training to the needs of employers, we are building the infrastructure for success and helping prepare our kids for college and careers. The Science Center is an important part of our comprehensive effort to develop a talent pipeline for the jobs of today and tomorrow.”

As part of its mission to revitalize science education in Connecticut, the Science Center is partnering with the Connecticut Department of Education to launch a system of Next Generation Science professional learning opportunities for teachers and school administrators.

“The Connecticut Science Center is playing a pivotal role in changing the way science is taught, how students are learning, and helping teachers incorporate the Next Generation Science Standards into the classroom,” said Commissioner of Education Dianna R. Wentzell. “The shared public and private investment that created the Science Center gave our state and its children a tremendous opportunity to reinvigorate interest in science and advance science instruction and learning, and we are so pleased to see that shared commitment continue in this way.”

“Our kids are full of ability, and we must enable them to discover and then realize their potential to be successful individuals and highly productive contributors to our society,” said State Senator John Fonfara, who represents the Science Center’s Hartford Legislative District. “From family experiences that open children’s eyes to science to the latest science curriculum and powerful teaching strategies, the Science Center helps students to make careers, and make a difference in science and innovation.”

Like the original state-led development of the Science Center, the *Science Forward* initiative is funded by a public-private partnership. The funding includes \$10.5 million approved by the state in 2014, plus \$5.5 million pledged by a wide range of generous corporations, foundations, and individuals, led by the Science Center’s all-volunteer Board of Trustees. Leading donors include Travelers, United Technologies

Corporation, the Maximillian E. and Marion O. Hoffman Foundation, Stanley Black and Decker, Pitney Bowes Foundation, Roger & Sondra Beit, Mark & Luanne Paley, the Cheryl Chase and Stuart Bear Family Foundation, the Barnes Group, Charles & Christine Shivery, John & Tamara Lundgren, and Shipman & Goodwin.

For information about the Connecticut Science Center's current offerings and information about operating hours, programs, and tickets, visit [CTScienceCenter.org](http://CTScienceCenter.org).

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**About the Connecticut Science Center:** The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving more than 2 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: [www.CTScienceCenter.org](http://www.CTScienceCenter.org) or 860.SCIENCE.

**About the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers at the Connecticut Science Center** The Mandell Academy for Teachers is the Connecticut Science Center's high-impact professional development program for educators, offering training that supports rigorous science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and core curriculum standards. Mandell Academy for Teachers programs transform classroom instruction, resulting in engaging learning experiences that lead to achievement for all students. The Mandell Academy offers student engagement strategies, science content and practices, engineering practices, science coaching, STEM Units, Inquiry for Teaching and Learning, and more. With accreditation by Charter Oak State College, educators who participate in the Inquiry for Teaching and Learning series will earn graduate credits (3 credits per year for 3 years) toward a master's degree. For more information, visit [CTScienceCenter.org/Mandell](http://CTScienceCenter.org/Mandell), or call (860) 520-2179.