

newscience

NEWS FOR MEMBERS, PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS AND FRIENDS OF THE SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER

SUMMER 2025

A VOLCANO AWAKENS • A CITY VANISHES

POMPEII THE EXHIBITION

SEE IT TODAY!

neon

M museo
archeologico
nazionale
di napoli

POMPEII
PARCO
ARCHEOLOGICO
DI POMPEII



Ministero
dei beni e delle
attività culturali
e del turismo

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Letter from the President

Dear Friends of the Saint Louis Science Center,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write to you as the new President and CEO of the Saint Louis Science Center. I am honored to be part of this remarkable team and institution dedicated to igniting curiosity, inspiring innovation, and demonstrating that science is for everyone. Though I have only been here a few months, my connection with the Science Center stretches back to my childhood as a St. Louis native, where my early visits to the McDonnell Planetarium inspired me to pursue my own journey in STEM and informal science learning.

Throughout my career, I have experienced firsthand how hands-on exploration and immersive STEM experiences can change lives. The Science Center makes these transformative moments happen every day, and I am so excited to carry our mission's strong momentum forward in this year and those ahead.

In this issue of *NewScience*, we are excited to share more about *POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION*, which has returned to the Science Center by popular demand. Featuring new artifacts and interactives that will transport guests back to 79 A.D., this limited-time special exhibition invites you to discover more about the ancient Roman city of Pompeii, its inhabitants and their lives, and its rediscovery after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Inside, I encourage you to mark your calendar for *SciFest: Play and Creativity Expo*, as well as learn more about *Science Center Up Late*, a new after-hours series coming soon for adults, and our first event, *Experience Sound!* In addition, see how you can catch the Science Center at events like *Storytime in the Commons* from Nine PBS or take part in a live *Story Collider* storytelling session inside the OMNIMAX® Theater.

Please join us in looking back on the recent launch of our Corporate Partners Membership Program and a tour of local innovator Stereotaxis for members of our Einstein Society. In our Donor Spotlight, we are proud to showcase BJC HealthCare for their recent generous support and collaboration to advance healthcare and inspire young minds to get involved in STEM.

To our Science Center members, donors, corporate partners, and Zoo Museum District supporters, I wish to share a sincere thank you. Your generosity helps to power our mission to inspire everyone to be curious and engaged in science. Our work would not be possible without dedicated friends like you, and together, we are making science learning fun, engaging, and accessible to all.

There's so much to discover, and there's no better place to do so than right here at the Saint Louis Science Center.



With gratitude,

Ray Vandiver
President and CEO

To inspire everyone to be curious and engaged in science. Mission of the Saint Louis Science Center

Connect with us for updates,
special events and fun science.



Smithsonian Affiliate
Membership Program



Summer Hours

Monday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday:

9:30am – 4:30pm*

Friday: 9:30am – 7:30pm*

*Open at 9:30am on Sundays:

May 25–August 31

*Open until 7:30pm on Fridays:

May 30–August 29

*Open until 5:30pm Saturday, July 5
& Sunday, July 6

*Open until 5:30pm Saturday, August 30
& Sunday, August 31

Contact

314.289.4400 | slsc.org

Saint Louis Science Center

5050 Oakland Avenue

St. Louis, Missouri 63110

Membership

Services, Sales & Member Reservations:

314.289.4414

slsc.org/membership

memberships@slsc.org

Reservations

Advance Sales & Group Reservations:

314.289.4424

Education

Programming information: education@slsc.org

Events

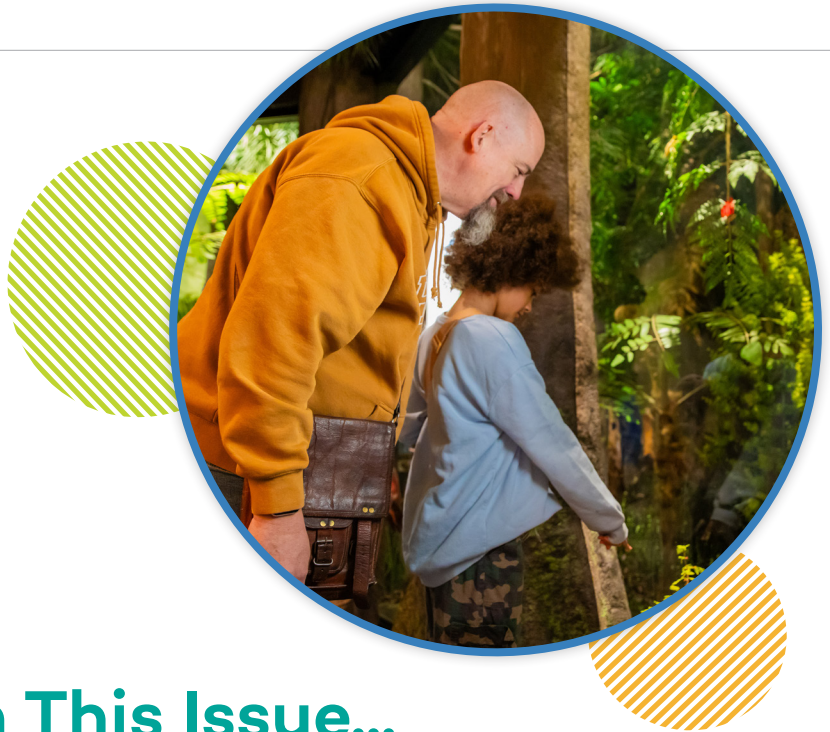
Host your next private event at the Saint Louis Science Center. Services and catering provided by Saint Louis Science Center Events. For information: 314.286.4667.

Accessibility

Complimentary wheelchairs and strollers are available in the lobby. Motorized scooters are available for a rental fee. Personal Hearing Assistance Devices are available at the OMNIMAX® Theater and Planetarium. Captiview caption devices are available for all OMNIMAX® films.

Official Partners

The Saint Louis Science Center gratefully acknowledges the support of our Official Partners.



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 MEET THE TEAM

Dr. Ray Vandiver

PRESIDENT & CEO, SAINT LOUIS SCIENCE CENTER

It began at home, in St. Louis, with parents who encouraged creativity and experiential learning, and with a visit to the James S. McDonnell Planetarium that sparked curiosity and wonder. It continued with the birthday gift of a telescope and the mentorship of an uncle. The joyful childhood of Ray Vandiver led to passions for science, music, and family, all of which contributed to the hobbies and career choices that brought him back home to the Saint Louis Science Center as its new leader.

Vandiver had a Missouri education. He studied physics at Saint Louis University, where he received his bachelor's degree, then continued his education at Missouri University of Science and Technology and completed a doctorate in physics. His dissertation focused on the production and extraction of polarized electrons from an optically pumped helium discharge.

But Ray Vandiver wasn't solely focused on physics; playing music was also an important part of his life from the very beginning. "Both interests are a result of my childhood and the environment inspired by my parents," explained Vandiver. "My father was a musician, an artist, and a carpenter by trade. He played guitar and sang, and in our home, we would frequently sing as a family. My mother had a beautiful voice. I think it was important that my father made instruments accessible; they were out, generally hanging on the wall, with an explicit invitation for us as children to play, with no restriction."

As a result, Vandiver has no memories of a time in his life before he started playing guitar. And although he received a drum set at age four and still has one today, he remembers banging on pots and pans with wooden spoons before that.

That influence carried over into the next generation; upon the birth of his son, Vandiver found the guitar more accessible. "And then, my musical identity shifted to where I was a guitar player and vocalist, and writing and performing music became an important creative outlet for me. And it's very gratifying because my son is also a musician and a multi-instrumentalist and performs and plays."

But it's not just the influence of music that carried over into the next generation; Dr. Vandiver has spent his career in science museums, his wife teaches math and science, and his son is a mechanical engineer.

So how did this musical child become a scientist? "I think about where I discovered a passion for science, and it is absolutely connected to the James S. McDonnell Planetarium. The astronomy shows, the Star Shows, triggered something in me."

The result of this interest was that Vandiver requested, and his parents purchased, an inexpensive telescope from Sears for his seventh birthday, which "led to countless hours in my backyard exploring the night sky and trying to get other people to join me at my star parties. I kept that telescope until I went to graduate school," he reflected. "It was a companion of mine for all those years."

"But also," he continued, "I was fortunate to have a mentor in an uncle who is a master plumber, who has a passion for science and shared that passion with me, gave me someone to talk to, look up to, a mentor of sorts."

Vandiver explained that his childhood was filled with elements that researchers have proven are important to both physical and cognitive development in children. "The emphasis in my home growing up was around hands-on learning, experiential learning, and I don't know if my parents were prescribing to any specific pedagogy, but nonetheless there was the explicit invitation to do it yourself. So, at a young age, I'm fixing things, taking things apart, playing in the mud, playing in the woods, and just experiencing the world with a multisensory approach, working on cars, working in the yard, working on and in the house, but also playing music."

When Vandiver was nine, another uncle asked him at a family wedding what he wanted to be when he grew up, and he replied, "Either a physicist or a carpenter," which generated a lot of laughter. "My career through science museums has allowed me to be both." He added, "I think a big part of my career in museums is rooted in my involvement in the design and fabrication of interactive learning exhibits."

It wasn't just the Planetarium that opened young Ray's mind; he also credits visits to the Saint Louis Zoo, Saint Louis Art Museum, Missouri History Museum, and Missouri Botanical Garden with influencing him "in terms of exploration and access to learning opportunities that otherwise would have been beyond my family's means and reach."

"Access to these cultural treasures was beyond impactful and afforded by the generosity of the St. Louis city and county community providing those resources at no cost to guests, save through taxes, of course. As a young person I took it for granted, and I just thought museums were free until I left the city and found out no, that is a treasure."

Although the Vandivers have lived elsewhere in Missouri, as well as places farther away like Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Portland, Oregon, they are still very much a St. Louis family. "I have extended family in St. Louis on both sides, approaching 40 first cousins in the St. Louis area. There hasn't been a year without frequent visits to St. Louis. My wife is also from St. Louis, and her family is here as well. St. Louis has always been our home."

And what are Vandiver's plans for the Science Center and his new team?

"I think part of what we share in our love for museum work is the ability to push the envelope, be creative, maintain relevance and community connections – it requires that you lean in, constantly, and the result is every day is fresh and new. New challenges, opportunities, and the explicit invitation to be creative."

On that topic, he feels strongly. "This invitation to be creative isn't just in terms of the methods and educational modes we project, but I think we need to explicitly reflect those, as well. In terms of process skills, informal education provides opportunities to practice process skills like creativity and innovation, problem solving, communication and collaboration. This isn't just what we project; we need to reflect that, so there's also an explicit invitation for us to be creative, collaborative, problem-solving critical thinkers."

As for the team, "It's my experience that staff enthusiasm is the most important driver of organizations of our type. And I think any employee wants to be able to have a voice and contribute to the success of the organization. I aspire to work at a joyful workplace. And if any place has the chance to be joyful, a place like the Saint Louis Science Center seems obvious."





MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

PATRICK VIGUEIRA AND FAMILY

How long have you been a member?

My family and I have been members of the Science Center for three years. However, I have been enjoying visiting since my first trips to St. Louis in 2007. What took me so long to become a member?!

How often do you visit, and what do you like to do here?

We visit the Science Center several times each month. The Discovery Room is one of my favorite spaces. Dr. Angeline Catena and her team maintain a beautiful learning environment with a thoughtful, rotating curriculum of high-impact educational activities. The opportunity for my children, Cecelia and Calvin, to regularly interact with a world-class scientist and educator like Dr. Catena is extremely valuable. Our group always leaves exciting Discovery Room sessions with big smiles and an extra spark of curiosity!

The McDonnell Planetarium Star Shows are also some of our favorite activities. I love lying back on a comfy mat with my kids while we take in an engaging Star Show. My kids often have to be pried away from the exhibits on the top floor of the Planetarium when it is time for the next show to start. We always leave the shows with new information and plans about which objects we should target next with our backyard telescope.

My wife, Dr. Cindy Vigueira, and I are biologists, so we enjoy exploring all the life science exhibits with our kids. The root towers in the GROW Gallery are some of my favorites in the spring and summer.

What are your favorite types of member events?

We do our best to catch all the OMNIMAX® Previews, and the Member Appreciation Nights are always a bunch of fun.

Tell us a favorite memory about the Saint Louis Science Center.

At the OMNIMAX Member Preview of *Ocean Odyssey* in May of 2023, my daughter Cecelia was invited to share some facts about the ocean. I was super proud of the way she marched right down to the front of the crowded theater and shared her preschool knowledge on the similarities between squid and octopuses.

My son Calvin and I have built some epic structures with hundreds of Keva planks in the *Dream It. Build It.* exhibit. We have spent hours constructing enormous towers and domino staircases. The most fun part of all is when we get to send them all tumbling down!

What's your favorite member benefit, and why?

My favorite benefit is the ASTC reciprocal member program. This has been a tremendous asset to our family. Over the past three years, our family has visited 11 different science centers and children's museums in five states outside of Missouri without paying admission. The ASTC reciprocal member program has saved us \$1,492 in admission fees. The process is super easy. I always call ahead to confirm the specific reciprocity process at each institution. We typically present our Science Center membership with our IDs and are welcomed in, free of charge.

In St. Louis, we are very lucky to have so many high-quality museums that are free to visit. I realize how spoiled we are when we travel to other cities. Our family always travels on a budget, so we often hesitate to pay hefty admission fees unless we have a significant block of time to explore a museum. After we have decided on a destination, I break out my ASTC reciprocity list and a map. With the admission barrier removed, we don't hesitate to check out a new science center as we are passing through town. These experiences enrich our road trips, and our family has made great memories exploring each new center together.

For anyone considering becoming a member, why would you recommend it?

The Science Center membership is an outstanding value! The free admission to OMNIMAX documentaries, Planetarium Star Shows, and Discovery Room sessions, in addition to the convenient, free parking easily justify the cost of membership. The ASTC admission reciprocity program is a fantastic bonus. Most importantly, the member events help our family to be part of the vibrant community of scientists in St. Louis. We are a science family, and the Saint Louis Science Center is our happy place!



Share your membership stories with us at memberships@slsc.org!



UPCOMING MEMBER EVENTS

SUNDAY, JUNE 15 | 9:00AM

New Member Expedition

Tickets available now!

SUNDAY, JUNE 15 | 11:00AM & 1:00PM

Member Lounge: Father's Day

Tickets available now!

THURSDAY, JUNE 26 | 6:00PM

Member Mission: Pollinators

Tickets available May 29

THURSDAY, JULY 10 | 5:30 & 7:00PM

OMNIMAX® Member Preview: *Wild Rescue*

Tickets available June 12

THURSDAY, AUGUST 7 | 6:00PM

Special Member Event: MAKERSPACE with Cardinals Kids Club

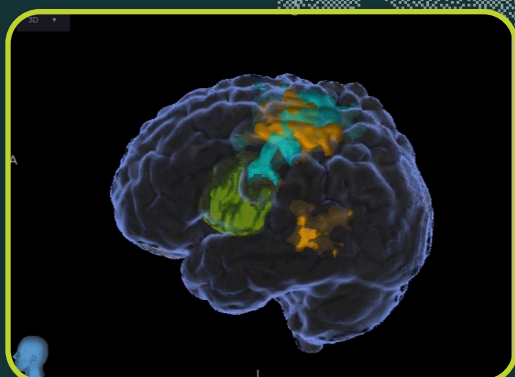
Tickets available July 10

Visit slsc.org/member-events
for more information!

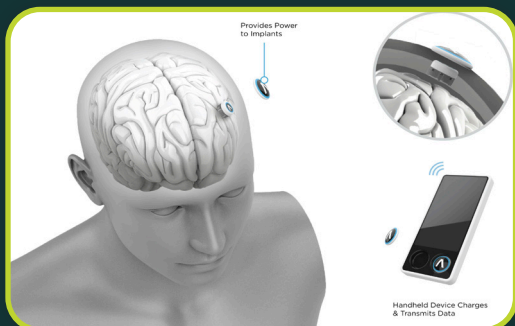
Brain STEM:

Science and Technology

Meet Medicine and Art



AI-based imaging to define brain networks. The green region is a brain tumor, while orange is the language network and blue is the motor network.



A nickel sized implant to treat depression.



A minimally invasive laser probe to treat brain tumors.

You have so many titles and work accomplishments — what are you working on right now relating to neurosurgery, biomedical engineering, and rehabilitative medicine?

I am working on a number of projects. The notable ones include advancing brain-computer interfaces for stroke patients, developing AI techniques to map brain function for patients with brain tumors, and wearable earbuds that can be used to reduce inflammation in the brain and body after injuries and stroke.

What does a typical workday or work week look like for you?

It tends to be busy. I often have several different things that I do every day, which range from patient care and brain surgery to overseeing a large research and laboratory enterprise, and even leading efforts within and outside of WashU to turn the science and ideas we examine into clinical products that touch patients. It varies a lot. Some days I only do surgeries; other days are consumed with engineering and business-related work.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do?

The variety. I am never bored. Also, the people I work with are brilliant and always stimulating, and they challenge me to learn more and be better.

What are the top three things you would want people to know about the brain or neuroscience in general?

1. The brain is extraordinarily plastic and malleable; its ability to adapt to the use of any tool (from skis to surgical instruments), to learn new languages, and to heal from injury is extraordinary.
2. The brain is near-infinitely complex, and there is always more to learn.
3. We are entering a renaissance in understanding brain function that will transform our lives. This is happening now because of the rise of cheap computational power and AI. Together, these give us the tools to handle the massive amounts of information associated with the complexity of neural processing. Whether it's brain-computer interfaces, transformative new treatments for neurologic disease, or technologies that can make us smarter, we will see and feel these new changes in the coming decades.

“Always work hard. Always be curious. Always seek mentorship. Always know that any of these great efforts can never happen alone; you need a team to get there.”

What does the future of rehabilitative medicine look like from your point of view? What are you most excited about?

It's an exciting time when we are learning enough about the brain to figure out ways to change and modify it. As an example, we developed a brain-computer interface to help stroke patients recover their hand and arm function after a stroke. This technology emerged after years of research to help us understand how the brain forms motor intentions. In parallel with affordable, small computing, we were able to convert what was originally a technology that was once several computers on a tabletop to a device that could be worn on the forearm.

The future looks bright for developing new technologies and methods to fix the brain in ways that we never thought possible. Imagine an implant that can decode speech and help people communicate with their thoughts alone. This will help people with ALS, stroke, and cancer of the face and neck.

You are a neurosurgeon, but also an inventor, an author, and a playwright. How did you get interested in all those things, and how did science and creativity overlap and become something you could pursue simultaneously?

Fundamentally, I wanted to see brain-computer interfaces and neurotechnology transform people's lives. I took a three-pronged approach for how I thought that needed to happen. Specifically, I needed to do the deep neuroscience to understand brain function and the brain's computer interface and show that our advanced technologies were possible.

First, I had to show that using brain signals, I can apply mathematical approaches to decode people's intentions and thoughts. I had to publish those results in scientific journals and show this idea of taking the philosophic concept of a thought and converting it to math and a digital code. Second, I needed to demonstrate that these technologies could have self-sustaining economies, so I started businesses around them. Third, I wanted the public (outside of the small circles who do science) to understand and appreciate the impact and gravity of what some of these things could mean. That's the reason that I wrote the books and plays.

For those who are interested in being a brain surgeon (or even a playwright or author), what do you recommend they pursue both in and out of the classroom?

Always work hard. Always be curious. Always seek mentorship. Always know that any of these great efforts can never happen alone; you need a team to get there. Always give more than you take.

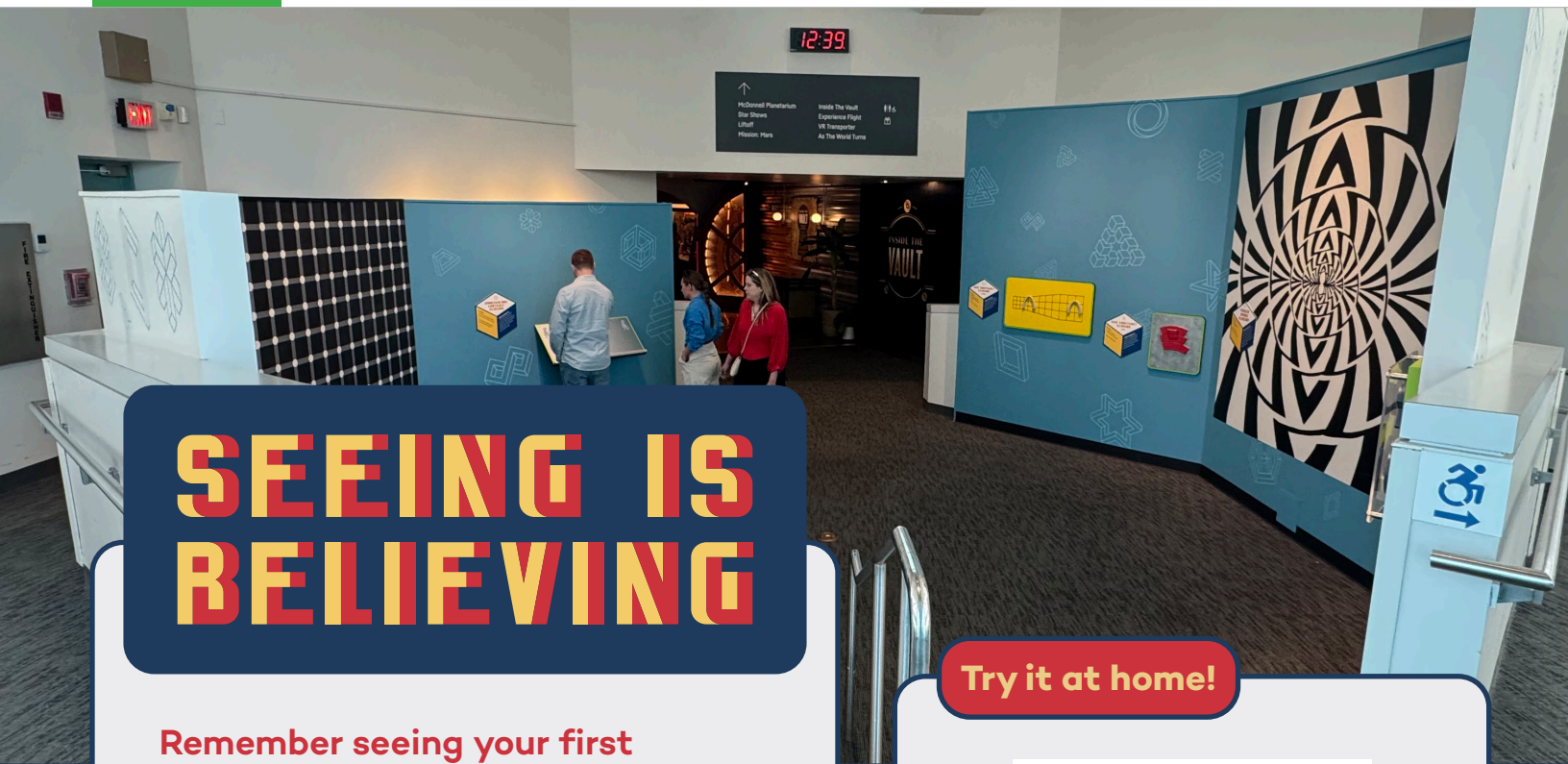
STEM EXPERT SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Eric Leuthardt is a neurosurgeon-scientist and professor in the departments of Neurological Surgery, Biomedical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He is the director of both the Center for Innovation in Neuroscience and Technology, which creates advanced next-generation medical technologies, fostering translation between neuroscience and clinical treatment, and the Brain Laser Center, which uses MRI-guided laser therapy to treat brain tumors and other neurological conditions.

Dr. Leuthardt has earned degrees in biology, theology, business, and medicine. He also pursued a postdoctoral fellowship in biomedical engineering, during which time he and his mentor developed one of the fundamental platforms used for brain-computer interfacing – technologies that enable people to control machines with their thoughts alone. Since that time, his research has focused on neuroprosthetic devices that link to the brain to restore function to patients with motor disabilities.

His work in the field has yielded numerous accolades, and in addition to numerous peer-reviewed publications, Leuthardt has over 1,000 issued or pending patents on file with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and has founded several companies.



SEEING IS BELIEVING

Remember seeing your first visual illusion as a kid?

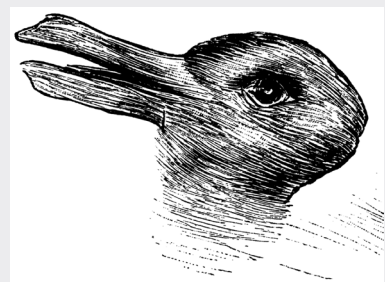
You and your buddy probably squabbled over whether you were seeing a rabbit or a duck, or maybe it was one that appeared to be both a young woman and an old woman. Visual illusions are always fun, and like most things, they can be explored and understood more clearly with science.

The Science Center is thrilled to bring illusions to our guests with the addition of an interactive illusion space we are calling *Seeing Is Believing*. Illusions are fun, in part because they reveal that perception can differ from reality. Our brains are constantly interpreting sensory information, and sometimes our brains are wrong.

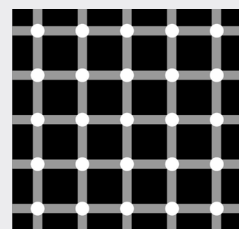
In the case of visual illusions, like the duck/rabbit, your eyes take in information and send it to the brain. It is a long journey from the eyes to the visual processing system at the back of the brain. Well, it's 50 milliseconds long or so, but that is a long enough lag that the brain has moved on with a reaction or thought of some sort – sometimes with incomplete information – or perhaps we believe we saw movement, or an image that is not there. Your brain is working to make sense of it because it is not possible for us to process more than one image at a time.

Illusions give us information about our thought processes and the interaction with our senses. They can also allow us to ask bigger questions about what is real. For example, even when you are told that an image isn't there – like the “black dots” in the image to the right – it can be hard to let go of how you are perceiving it. This summer, be sure to drop by *Seeing Is Believing*, located at the north end of the highway-spanning SkyBridge. We think you will accurately perceive it to be fun and informative.

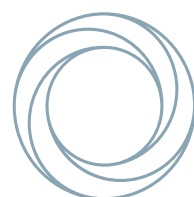
Try it at home!



Try to hold the image of the duck and the rabbit at the same time. Were you able to do it?



Look at the second image and see the black dots in it. Are they really black, though?





New in the Bumblebee Corner

It's the time of year when the St. Louis area, along with the GROW Gallery, is full of leafy trees, blooming plants, and our favorite: buzzing bees. Lucky for St. Louis, the Science Center's GROW Gallery houses an actual bumblebee hive with *Bombus impatiens* species. This is extremely unique. Unlike honeybees, whose colonies can survive year-round, bumblebee colonies are seasonal, and they are often located underground and out of sight.

This summer, we're excited to provide guests an easier way to see what's buzzing in our updated Bumblebee Corner. To help guests get closer, our Exhibits team rebuilt the experience to include additional cameras and better microphone systems. This year, guests will get to view the new colony from at least two different perspectives as a result. And, as in years past, guests will also be able to listen to them.

One addition our team is especially excited to show off is a new interaction that highlights the "superpower sight" of bumblebees. This interactive activity allows guests to actually see flowers the way bees do.

Please stop in at the GROW Pavilion and check out the hive during your next visit. The bees are installed in our bee box at the end of April or beginning of May and survive until August or September, depending on weather and hive health.



Fun facts:



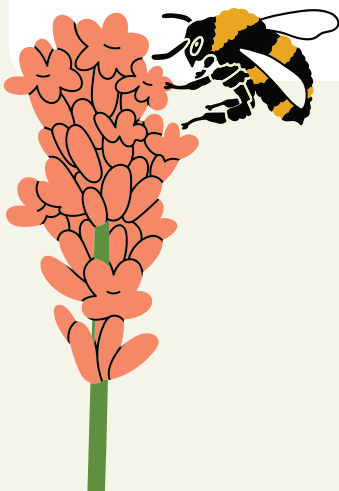
Missouri is home to **more than 450 types of bees**. Of those 450, at least six are in the genus *Bombus*.



Bumblebees have **pollen baskets on their legs**, as do three other groups of bees, including honeybees.



Bees have **five eyes** each!



LASER SHOWS TURN 50 IN ST. LOUIS

Join us this summer in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Laser Shows in St. Louis!

Planetarium Laser Shows were the brainchild of experimental filmmaker Ivan Dryer and partner Charlie McDonald, who joined with Caltech physicist Dr. Elsa Garmire to bring new laser technology out of the laboratory and create an otherworldly form of entertainment. The first performances took place during November 1973 at Los Angeles' Griffith Planetarium and would go on to become a worldwide phenomenon.

June 1975 saw the premiere of Laser Shows in St. Louis when the James S. McDonnell Planetarium became only the fifth planetarium in the world to host continuous, live laser music performances. St. Louis joined Los Angeles, Denver, New York, and San Francisco in offering this unique combination of entertainment and science. Throughout 1975, shows expanded internationally to Toronto, Canada, and Kyoto, Japan, and by 1976, laser shows were being performed at over 30 locations worldwide.

The original LASERIUM shows were performed live by a team of laserists who added their own passion and creativity to each laser concert, ensuring that no two performances were exactly alike. While technology has changed through the years to include 3D atmospheric and a variety of special effects, performing aspects of the show live has remained a fixture of laser shows in St. Louis.

"The live elements we incorporate not only improve the quality of the experience but also make every performance unique to St. Louis," said Will Snyder, laserist and McDonnell Planetarium manager. "Our team is proud to contribute to these performances that have formed fond memories for generations of St. Louisans."

The McDonnell Planetarium's 2025 Summer Laser Show series will start on June 20 and run through August 10. Tickets sell out quickly, so get yours today! For a full list of offerings and ticket information, please visit slsc.org/lasers.



EARTH: Earth as Art

In addition to their scientific value, many satellite images are simply intriguing to view. The new **Landsat: eARTH Resources Seen From Space** display in the lobby of the James S. McDonnell Planetarium features the mesmerizing beauty of river deltas, mountains, and other sandy, salty, and icy landscapes in a variety of high-resolution Landsat images.

Since 1972, Landsat satellites have regularly taken images of Earth's surface, providing novel insights about the planet we call home.

Earlier NASA photographs of Earth from the Mercury and Gemini missions inspired scientists to champion a satellite-based remote sensing program to monitor the planet's natural resources. Continuous measurements of Earth's surface by Landsat 1 and its successor satellites have helped document planetary change. Patterns, cycles, and trends of our natural and built environment have been revealed by the decades of data provided by Landsat.

The Landsat suite of satellites adds unparalleled longevity to the record of Earth's surface. Because Landsat provides freely available, comparable, objective data, many have likened Landsat to a time machine for looking back at planetary change. Landsat gives us knowledge of ecosystem history for the entire planet over the past five decades; for example, images of wetlands change over time to show rising and falling water levels due to flooding and droughts.



As we strive to meet sustainable development goals and balance competing needs for Earth's finite resources, the Landsat data record has only grown in importance.

Today, we are in what has been called a golden era for geospatial data. The value of a space-based planetary perspective has led to a growing suite of regularly collected data about our planet. When used together, these various satellite measurements give us a stronger understanding of our changing home planet and create a robust support system for making decisions about things like where to build roads or dams, where to plant crops or place cell phone towers and much more.

The Landsat Program is a joint partnership between NASA and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). NASA builds and launches the satellites; USGS helps define the measurements needed for science, operates the satellites once they are in orbit and maintains the data archive.

Experience a new collection of satellite images on display beginning in **July 2025!**



Thank you for voting for the McDonnell Planetarium as the **#1 planetarium** in *USA Today's* 10Best Readers' Choice Awards!

Astronomy Dates

JUNE 20 | **Summer Solstice**

The Summer Solstice on June 20 marks the beginning of astronomical summer in the Northern Hemisphere and the Sun's highest position in the sky at local noon. After this date, the Sun will get lower, and our days will grow shorter.

JULY 4 | **Mercury at Greatest Elongation**

While waiting for fireworks on the 4th of July, look low in the west at sunset to spot Mercury! On this night, Mercury will reach its greatest elongation from the Sun. This is the best time to view our innermost planet since it will be near its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky.

AUGUST 12-13 | **Perseid Meteor Shower**

The Perseid meteor shower is typically one of the year's best opportunities to see shooting stars. Produced by debris left in space from comet Swift-Tuttle, upwards of 100 meteors per hour can be spotted during the peak. Unfortunately, in 2025, the waning gibbous moon may block out the fainter meteors, but best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight.

FROM PLATE TO PLANET,

Food Waste Impacts Us All

Every day across America, food that is perfectly good ends up in trash cans rather than in stomachs—from partially eaten restaurant meals and bruised apples to forgotten fridge leftovers. In fact, did you know that according to St. Louis nonprofit earthday365, Americans waste roughly 40% of their food?

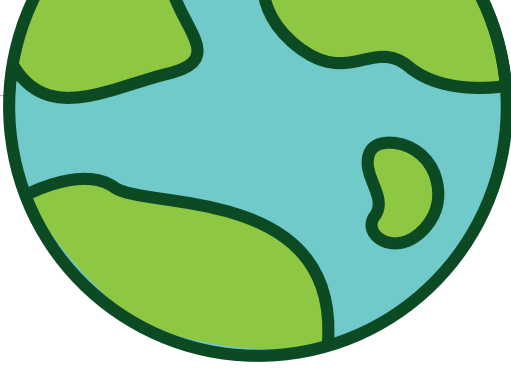
Food waste is an issue that affects everyone and in ways big and small. When we throw away groceries we purchased but did not use, it impacts our wallets. When discarded food sits in landfills, it releases methane gas that strains our environment. And when we throw away perfectly edible food—an estimated 125 billion pounds each year, most of which is perfectly nutritious—in a world where many people go hungry, it can't reach those who need it most.

At the Science Center, guests in the GROW Gallery can see up close how not every vegetable or piece of fruit may be the “perfect” shape or color, but despite the outward differences can have the same fresh flavor and be used in the same ways.



And for when food and scraps (like banana and orange peels, apple cores or even coffee grounds) can't be used, composting offers a landfill diversion solution that allows what would have been wasted to become fertilizer for other plants. Guests can visit the GROW composting area by the chicken coop to see firsthand how food scraps break down and turn into fertilizer.

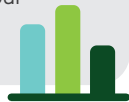
Take a look at the impact of food waste and some simple steps to help curb it. Then, stop by the GROW Gallery on your next visit to the Science Center to discover more.



How Does Food Waste Harm Our World (and Its People)?

Wasted food causes extra strain on the environment by wasting important resources like water and land for farming.

Already a resource-heavy process, food production requires everything from water, energy, land, soil, and human labor to elaborate systems of infrastructure for production, processing, and distribution. Allowing food to go to waste squanders these important resources. According to earthday365, in the U.S., food waste uses more than **20%** of the nation's freshwater, nearly **20%** of fertilizer, **18%** of our cropland, and **21%** of landfills.



Food waste comes at a cost. The U.S. loses approximately \$218 billion per year, with overbuying, poor planning, and confusion on labels and safety all contributing to wasted food in stores, restaurants, and homes. Taking personal action to help curb food waste is one of the largest ways individuals can help impact climate change (and save money).



Roughly 12% of American households are considered food insecure, where people lack consistent access to enough food for an active life. Reducing our country's food waste by 15% could provide enough food to address this issue—and impact more than 25 million people each year.



Steps You Can Take!

By following the **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle** method, we can keep edible food from ending up in the landfill.

- + Plan meals in advance (bonus points for planning around foods that are about to expire!)
- + Make a grocery list and stick to it
- + Eat leftovers, or incorporate leftovers into new meals
- + Learn the difference between “Best By,” “Sell By,” and “Use By” dates at fsis.usda.gov
- + Compost food scraps (the last chance before sending them to a landfill)

Come to the Science Center's GROW Gallery to learn more about agriculture and the ways our food is grown. Learn more at slsc.org/grow. Discover more about earthday365 and food waste at earthday-365.org.

THIS SUMMER AT THE OMNIMAX® Theater



When Stories Collide

THURSDAY, JUNE 5 | 7:00-8:30PM

For 13 years, the groundbreaking radio series *Story Collider* has been sharing powerful stories that shape our understanding of science and its place in our lives. People who tune in also discover how non-scientists relate to science and how STEM impacts us all in unexpected ways. Many of these transformative stories highlight tales of triumph in the face of adversity, showcasing the sacrifices these storytellers have made in the pursuit of truth and knowledge.

The Saint Louis Science Center's mission is to inspire everyone to be curious and engaged in science, making a partnership between us and *Story Collider* a perfect match.

In collaboration with St. Louis Public Radio, we are thrilled to host a live storytelling session of *Story Collider* in the OMNIMAX® Theater. The evening will feature the fascinating journeys of five local STEM or STEM-adjacent individuals, followed by a short Q&A session. This event takes place Thursday, June 5 from 7:00-8:30pm; tickets are available through stlpr.org.

SATURDAY, JULY 21



On Saturday, June 21, the Saint Louis Science Center is set to host a Super Smash Bros. competition that is tailored to newcomers and players of all ages!

What makes this event unique? Players who are deemed too talented are disqualified from entering the competition. This leaves the crown up for grabs for players who haven't had their chance to shine yet!

The Saint Louis Smash Arcadian has been one of our largest events here at the Science Center, and it always proves to be an event you do not want to miss!

Have questions or want to enter? Visit slsc.org/esports or join the Saint Louis Science Center's official Discord!

INTRODUCING:

Science Center Up Late

The Saint Louis Science Center is *the* place to be for STEM learning opportunities in our region. But if you ever thought to yourself, "I'm waiting for my turn to play the giant Mario controller, but these kids are taking forever, and their parents are *staring* at me..." we want you to know that we hear you loud and clear!

Moving on from our successful and beloved First Friday program, we knew we wanted to look deeper at providing opportunities for adults to geek out together in our galleries. To that end, we're thrilled to announce our new program, *Science Center Up Late*! This premium, after-hours series will activate every space in our building and will be available to our **21+** crowd. Featuring popular topics in science and technology, each event will be different, but common elements may include fun activities, opportunities to purchase exciting cocktails and non-alcoholic beverages, as well as premium food options, and of course, engaging partnerships with local experts.

These ticketed experiences will be available quarterly, and we'll focus on a wide range of topics to ensure there's always a reason to come back.

Experience Sound | SATURDAY, JULY 19, 6:00-10:00PM

A-one, a-two, a-one-two-three-four... and then the whole band kicks in! Our first event in the *Science Center Up Late* program will be *Experience Sound*! This event will focus on the science and technology behind sound and music—a topic that really resonates with our community. We've got everything from music festivals and grade-A music venues to recording studios and audio engineers! What better way to kick off our new series than with something we all love?

Featuring a wide range of experiences, like surrounding yourself with atmospheric audio in the OMNIMAX® Theater or sipping cocktails in the McDonnell Planetarium themed as an audio-bar inspired by the Japanese Jazz Kissa, this night will be one that does more than just sound good! Scientists, musicians, and engineers will be on hand to answer your burning questions, you'll learn what's next from our partners, and you'll be able to participate in a twist on the silent disco: **Quantum Disco!** Featuring two dueling DJs you can listen to by switching channels on your provided headset, you can dance the night away never knowing which DJ you preferred!

Tickets are \$20 per person. Members enjoy a discounted rate of \$15. Exciting food and drink options will be available for purchase. Stay tuned to our website for more details. **We can't wait to jam out with you!**



SciFest: Play and Creativity Expo

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9 | 9:30AM-4:30PM

Enjoy our free, all-day event showcasing how STEM concepts, innovation, play and creativity all go together! Meet, work and play alongside artists, authors, innovators, STEM experts, creatives, and entrepreneurs. Get involved and engage your own creativity and bright ideas. This event is made possible through the generous support of **BJC HealthCare**. See the latest news about SciFest at slsc.org/scifest.



A VOLCANO AWAKENS • A CITY VANISHES

POMPEII

THE EXHIBITION

Back by Popular Demand!

The sudden disaster that destroyed the city of Pompeii also preserved a unique record of daily life at the height of the Roman Empire. In *POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION*, artifacts on loan from the Naples National Archaeological Museum in Italy and the Archaeological Park of Pompeii take guests through a unique Roman villa and onto the winding streets of Pompeii, exploring the forum, theater, and marketplace along the way. An immersive 4-D eruption experience allows guests to experience the eruption itself. CGI imagery, surround sound, and special effects bring Mount Vesuvius to life with startling reality.

Members receive the discounted ticket price of \$15 including the premium audio tour no matter when they visit (nonmembers pay \$20-\$29 depending on the package they select and the day of the week they visit). You will need your own smartphone and earbuds or headphones to access the audio tour. Tickets for children 4 and under are free but are still required.

Learn more and reserve tickets at slsc.org/pompeii.





“POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION is such a popular show because it’s so relatable, even while being so exotic. Ancient history typically tells us stories of great kings and generals and their accomplishments, but in this exhibition, you experience the world of everyday people.”

“Would you be surprised to know that fast food isn’t a new concept, and that in 79 A.D., you could get a pre-made meal in the market? Do you have any modular furniture in your home? If so, you have that in common with the Romans, who rearranged to make better use of their space. And of course, we have to talk about wine! Pompeiian wine was so well regarded that there’s evidence counterfeiters faked stamps on their amphorae to sell lesser-quality wine at higher prices.

The volcano that ended this prosperous city is ironically responsible for preserving it, granting us a look back in time. That view is like a ghostly mirror, with people not unlike us peering back. I can’t wait to experience this exhibition all over again!”

Neville Crenshaw, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, STRATEGIC PLANNING & SPECIAL PROJECTS



“POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION is such a well done and emotional exhibit. It takes you through the daily lives of the people who lived there in 79 A.D., getting to know their customs, what they treasured and what they believed in.”

“The exhibition makes it feel like you are like one of the people who lived there. So in the Eruption Gallery, you may feel sad, empty, and even a little scared. This gallery shows the time lapse of the eruption, from the sky turning black to the ash and debris falling and the last pyroclastic blast that wiped out the remainder of the city. The part that really tugs at my heartstrings is the audio. You hear the rocks hitting the ground, the dogs crying, and the strong winds.”

Lacey Chaney, SUPERVISOR, SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS AND FEATURED EXPERIENCES



“POMPEII: THE EXHIBITION sparks curiosity and sets people off on a lifetime love of learning. Both the beauty and tragedy in its story stay with you.”

“When people think of Pompeii, they think of the destruction caused by the volcano Vesuvius. However, Pompeii was a thriving port city; research shows that people were living in the area as early as 740 B.C. For me, a set of three bowls with color pigments sent me down a rabbit hole of research. Art has been a means of expression for centuries, but have you considered the experimentation and science that went into creating that art?

Preserved Pompeiian frescoes offer insight into these ancient artists. To create the full spectrum of colors featured throughout Pompeii, they combined berries, minerals, dirt, clay, and more. They experimented with how the minerals reacted to each other and learned they could change the colors even more through heat exposure. For example, to create red, artists ground four different types of minerals – kaolinite, quartz, calcite, and hematite – into a fine powder.

To me, seeing those pigment bowls is not just looking at objects that are over 2000 years old, that survived a deadly volcano, centuries of looting, and even the bombing of Pompeii during WWII. These objects represent humans’ desire to create.

Hosting this exhibition is a huge honor. For a time, we are the mouthpiece for this beautifully tragic piece of history. We get to share the stories of people who lived across the world thousands of years ago, and we can’t wait to share it with you.”

Kaylia Eskew, MANAGER, SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS AND FEATURED EXPERIENCES



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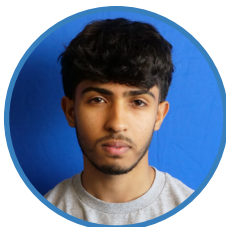
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Celebrating the Latest Graduates from the Science Center's YES Program!

In the spring, the Science Center's Youth Exploring Science (YES) program celebrated its newest graduating class. At a special ceremony held at the Taylor Community Science Resource Center on April 26, 11 YES teens marked their completion of the four-year program.

For more than 25 years, YES has inspired and prepared St. Louis area teens to pursue STEM careers. Exploring STEM through hands-on projects, community outreach and mentorship, as well as participation at Science Center events like the Community STEM Showcase, YES teens develop the 21st century skills needed to succeed after high school, in STEM-skilled workforce and beyond.

We spoke with this year's graduating teens to hear their plans for the future, as well as what stands out to them about their time in YES.



Ahmed Altaraichi

Ahmed plans to attend the University of Missouri-St. Louis to major in civil engineering.

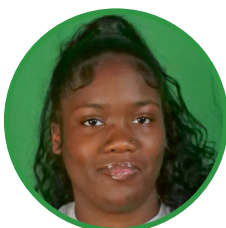
"The YES program is one of my best experiences. It helped me to explore many things and helped me be more comfortable during conversations and many other things. For anyone who wants to explore more things about science and improve their skills, the YES program would be the best decision."



Muktar Amiri

Muktar is currently deciding on a school but plans to major in mechanical engineering.

"The YES program is a bridge that connects young minds across cultures, fostering mutual understanding and global friendships."



Dajiah Belton

Dajiah plans to attend Lindenwood University and is currently deciding on a major but is interested in pre-law.





Rhys Harden

Rhys is currently deciding on a school but is considering St. Charles Community College or the University of Missouri–St. Louis and plans to major in computer science, with a minor in game development.

“YES provided me with hands-on experience, shaping my skills and confidence. It not only deepened my passion for science but also prepared me for the workforce, providing me with real-world knowledge that helps with job opportunities.”

Rose Jean

Rose plans to attend Maryville University to major in nursing.

Tyler Leslie

Tyler plans to attend Tuskegee University to study engineering.

“My time in YES has given me friendships that I’ll have for a long time.”



Terrell Powell

Currently considering either Maryville University or Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, Terrell plans to study computer engineering.

“If I had to use one word to describe the YES program, I would say ‘adventurous’ as every day was something new, and you never knew what to expect.”



Arthur Porter

Arthur is planning to attend McKendree University to major in business.



DuRae Wiley

DuRae plans to attend a University of Missouri school to major in computer science and architecture with a minor in cyber security.

“[YES teaches you to] be yourself, don’t let anyone change you, and remember to chase your dreams.”



Ennie Williams

Ennie is currently deciding on a school but plans to pursue a degree in aerospace engineering or environmental science.



Miles Wilson

Miles plans to attend Missouri State University to major in music theory and composition.

“Try to challenge yourself and let the Science Center change you in a positive way.”

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT YOUR MUSEUM?

IN FEBRUARY:

Revisiting SciFest: Engineering Expo

On Saturday, February 22, 2025, the Saint Louis Science Center achieved a new milestone, hosting 4,446 visitors and more than 370 STEM experts and professionals for SciFest: Engineering Expo. From shake tables and racing simulators to biomanufacturing and bridge building, guests could experience both the cutting-edge and everyday applications of engineering from a variety of fields at this building-wide event.

With representation from academic universities, professional organizations, and local companies, Engineering Expo attendees were able to connect with and discover a wide range of learning and career opportunities.

We are grateful to **The Boeing Company** for their support and sponsorship of this year's SciFest: Engineering Expo.



IN MARCH:

Are You (EV) Experienced?

For the second year, the Saint Louis Science Center hosted the EV Experience, filling Boeing Hall with electric vehicles, engaging activities, and informative presentations.

This event was made possible by the generous support of Ameren Missouri and your St. Louis Area BMW Centers, and with the Science Center they helped create a weekend of automotive excitement and STEM learning. Over 100 guests and their families registered to get hands-on behind the wheel of cutting-edge electric vehicles during our Ride and Drive opportunities on Saturday and Sunday. Featured vehicles included popular models like the BMW iX, i4 and more!

Our partners at Ameren Missouri shared insightful presentations on their Fast Charging Network and provided valuable tips for integrating an EV into daily life. Thank you to Ameren Missouri, St. Louis Area BMW Centers, and our guests who attended and enjoyed the EV Experience. We look forward to hosting next year's electrifying event!





IN APRIL:

Weather Day Takes Science Out to the Ball Game

Each spring, we hear loud cracks and heavy rumbles around downtown St. Louis. Sometimes these booming sounds are generated by winning Cardinals baseball, while others are caused by potentially severe weather. To help kids understand the sounds and science behind weather phenomena, Science Center team members have joined Fox 2 meteorologists and the St. Louis Cardinals the last three years to host Weather Day at the Ballpark — making Busch Stadium the largest science classroom in the region.

“With the larger setting at the stadium, we can really bring science to life in a spectacular way,” notes Maddie Earnest, associate director of galleries at the Science Center. “Using on-field experiments (like the Whoosh Chamber, Exploding Hail Can, and Tornado Cannon that guests can see in demonstrations on our Energy Stage), Jumbotron videos, and special help from Fredbird and a few Cardinals players, we show students that weather can be fun.”

Thousands of students from throughout the bi-state region have participated in Weather Day activities over the past several years. This year’s event on April 16 started with an hour-long show on the field with Science Center educators, meteorologists, and other guests explaining the hows and whys of common weather events that occur during the spring and summer — including cloud formation, hot and cold fronts, heavy winds/tornadoes, hail, and more. After the on-field presentation, students and teachers visited with Science Center team members and other partners on the Budweiser Terrace to learn more about STEM concepts and then enjoyed the Cardinals/ Astros game that afternoon.

ALSO IN APRIL:

Roman Space Telescope Lecture

On Thursday, April 17, more than 140 people gathered in the Science Center’s OMNIMAX® Theater for “Mapping the Universe – A Virtual Facility Tour.” This virtual presentation was led by Dr. Jeremy Perkins, a NASA scientist working on the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope.

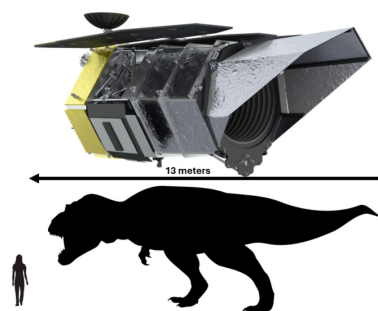
Described as a “next-generation observatory,” the Roman Space Telescope will be able to capture images of the universe with a wider field of vision, using technology that will allow us to discover 100,000 new planets outside of our own solar system, measure millions of galaxies, and study how our universe was shaped and continues to grow.

Using the projection capabilities of the OMNIMAX Theater, guests were treated to a substantial look at the telescope itself and its actual build site within Goddard Space Flight Center. Dr. Perkins covered not only the mission purposes and capabilities of the Roman Space Telescope, but also emphasized that all the information captured and shared by the telescope is to be free and open to the public so all can benefit from the data.

Roman’s data archive is expected to be around 20,000 terabytes in size after five years; Hubble’s data archive after 30 years measured 172 terabytes. The Roman Space Telescope will capture images covering five percent of the sky in just over seven months. It would take around a thousand years for Hubble or Webb to do the same. The Roman Telescope is presently on budget and scheduled to launch by May 2027.

Dr. Perkins fielded questions from guests of all ages at the conclusion of his talk and included several nods to St. Louis and the Saint Louis Science Center during his presentation, including gratitude for the opportunity to address a St. Louis audience since he spent time here as a PhD student at Washington University.

The Science Center is grateful to Dr. Perkins for providing such a personal, rich, collaborative experience connecting the St. Louis community to the wonders of space and astrophysics research and technology.



The Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope will be about 42 feet or 13 meters long – about the size of a semi-truck trailer or a Tyrannosaurus rex – when fully deployed.

INSIDE OUR BUILDING



AND IN OUR COMMUNITY

UHSP & SCIENCE CENTER SUMMER CAMPS RETURN

The Science Center Esports program is excited to partner with the University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis again this year for week-long, esports-themed summer camps for gamers ages 11-18. As always, campers will have opportunities to interact with STEM professionals from the esports, medical and technology fields. Campers will discuss topics like health, software, art, music and interactive media. They will also be given structured free play times in the afternoons and will learn about STEM career opportunities they might encounter in the future.

June's camp week will focus on esports education, while July's camp will focus on content creation. For both camp weeks, Monday through Thursday's camp sessions will take place on the UHSP campus, while Friday's camp session will be at the Science Center. Each week-long session costs \$250. Discover more and register your campers at slsc.org/esports.



THE SCIENCE CENTER AT GRAND CENTER

To better support our community partners and to shed a light on the STEM that surrounds us, we're working hard to bring the Science Center to the events that matter to you.

Among these exciting partnerships, we're thrilled to announce we'll be supporting Nine PBS and their Storytime in the Commons series. Hosted on the Public Media Commons in Grand Center, this event series will present Nine PBS KIDS content and characters in a family-friendly environment.

Look for us from 9:30am - 11:00am on the following dates:
Saturday, June 14 | Saturday, September 6

The event is FREE, and you can register at ninepbs.org.

TWO SCIENTISTS WALK INTO A BAR...

"What sounds like the beginning of a rather bad joke is actually a community program connecting scientists with the general public!" That's how the Fleet Science Center in San Diego, California, introduces its popular offsite program focused on connecting the community with local scientists. It's been such a hit there that we asked them if we could bring it to St. Louis!

Designed to reach adults interested in STEM where they are, *Two Scientists Walk into a Bar* seeks to slake your thirst for knowledge as you enjoy a frosty beverage! This informal format tosses out the lectures and PowerPoints in favor of smaller group conversations around questions you ask. Do you want to ask a neuroscientist how your brain works? Go for it! Want to ask that same neuroscientist what their favorite sci-fi movie is? That's still fair game!

This isn't just a great opportunity for our community to engage with science after hours; it's also a fun experience for local scientists, engineers and other STEM professionals who are always excited to have a nerdy conversation. Stay tuned to our website for more details on this new program and our debut locations.

CHEERS!



THE CAROL B. AND JEROME T.

LOEB PRIZE

FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Celebrating **30 Years** of Honoring Math and Science Educators

For 30 years, the Loeb Prize has honored outstanding science and math educators in the St. Louis area who demonstrate a passion to inspire learning.

This year, Amy Schwendemann from Pattonville High School was awarded the Carol B. and Jerome T. Loeb Prize for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics at an event celebrating the finalists at the McDonnell Planetarium on May 15. This year's event also honored Ryan Gibbs, who teaches at Hancock Place Middle School, as the second-place honoree. Other finalists included Karen Betz from Crestview Middle School, Jennifer Ronzio from Queen of All Saints, and Zachary Wangler from Rogers Middle School.

"Great teachers generate a love for learning that enables their students to accomplish amazing things," said Carol Loeb, who has been teaching high school math for more than 60 years. "As we celebrate the 30th Loeb Prize for Excellence in Teaching Science and Mathematics, we recognize these dedicated teachers who inspire their students to be curious and engaged in science and mathematics. It is my privilege to recognize these outstanding teachers for shaping tomorrow's STEM leaders, today." Carol Loeb is also a long-time member of the Science Center's Board of Trustees.

"The Science Center is proud to celebrate our 30-year partnership with the Loeb family in recognizing and rewarding outstanding teachers dedicated to STEM education and shaping the future," said Dr. Ray Vandiver, president and CEO of the Saint Louis Science Center.

Correction: In the previous issue of *NewScience*, we mistakenly stated that Gayle Coleman, one of the first educators to be recognized by the Loeb family, and her students took part in oceanographer Bob Ballard's Jason Project in the 1980s. Coleman and her students' participation occurred in the 1990s. We regret the error.



"As our world continues to evolve rapidly, students must excel not only in their academic fields but also in 21st-century skills. My ultimate goal is for my students to leave my class with the confidence to embark on the next chapter of their lives."

– Amy Schwendemann,
Pattonville High School

2025 LOEB PRIZE WINNER



Curie Society

Celebrates Gifts that Impact Engagement in Science for Future Generations

Discovering two elements. Pioneering the use of x-rays. Breaking new ground in understanding radiation, the atom, and chemistry. A Nobel Prize in Physics. These are just some of the achievements of Marie Curie, whose enduring legacy inspires scientists to this day.

In her spirit, the Saint Louis Science Center created the **Curie Society** to recognize those whose generosity will provide their own legacy of scientific inspiration for future generations through planned giving.

Whether made through a bequest, trust, real estate, or other strategies, planned gifts offer flexible means for making impactful contributions to further your Science Center's mission while securing immediate tax benefits. It's a powerful way to put your assets to work now to ensure that the Science Center will improve lives in our region for years to come.

Curie Society members are people like Alice and John Mohr. Both retired after long careers—John as an electrical engineer with McDonnell Douglas and Alice as a physical education and industrial arts teacher—the Mohrs will provide for the future of the Science Center through a percentage of their Donor Advised Fund beyond their lifetimes.

John says, **"After 28 years of volunteering here, I am convinced that the Science Center's emphasis on STEM education is worth continued support."**



Your support gives forward momentum to our mission to inspire everyone to be curious and engaged in science.

See what you helped make possible last year in the Science Center's 2024 Annual Report available at slsc.org/reports.

The Science Center invites you to join the Curie Society in 2025.

If you have included the Science Center in your estate giving plans, or wish to learn more about these opportunities, please call Bobby Sanderson at 314.289.4462.

Curie Society members will be included in a luncheon with Science Center President and CEO Dr. Ray Vandiver and will be listed as Curie Society members in publications and on the Science Center's donor wall.

Join others whose generous impact on wonder and discovery will endure! Explore the many ways to make a planned gift that is right for you at slsc.org/planned-giving.



The Corporate Partner Membership Launch Party Marks a New Chapter...and New Opportunities for Impact

The Saint Louis Science Center marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter with the Corporate Partner Membership Launch Party, bringing together corporate leaders, partners, and supporters for a memorable evening of networking and engagement.

Held in the GROW Pavilion on Thursday, April 24th, the event welcomed guests with complimentary bites and beverages, setting the stage for meaningful connections and conversations. Attendees learned more about the new **Corporate Partner Membership Program**, an initiative designed to provide organizations with exclusive benefits including discounted memberships, unique volunteer opportunities, and special event access—all while strengthening the collective impact on STEM education in the community.

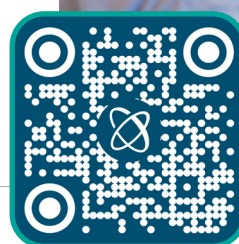
Kicked off with welcome remarks and an introduction to the Corporate Partner Membership Program, the evening emphasized the value this initiative offers to businesses looking to enrich their corporate culture and engage their employees.

The introduction of the Science Center's new President and CEO, Ray Vandiver, was a highlight of the celebration. During his presentation, Vandiver shared his vision for the organization's future, outlining key initiatives and projects that will shape the Science Center's impact in 2025 and beyond. His insights provided an inspiring look at the exciting developments ahead for both program members and the broader St. Louis region.

Following the presentation, guests enjoyed an exclusive tasting experience featuring St. Louis' own StillL 630, which showcased a special gin infused with botanicals grown right in the GROW Pavilion. This unique opportunity to engage with Science Center representatives and fellow corporate partners underscored the evening's collaborative spirit.

The event successfully launched the Corporate Partner Membership Program, offering organizations a chance to unlock a world of benefits while supporting STEM education across the region. As Nate Pedigo, senior director of institutional giving at the Science Center, emphasized, "This program is about more than just corporate perks—it's about making a lasting impact in the community."

Thank you to all who attended! The Science Center looks forward to building strong partnerships through this exciting new initiative.

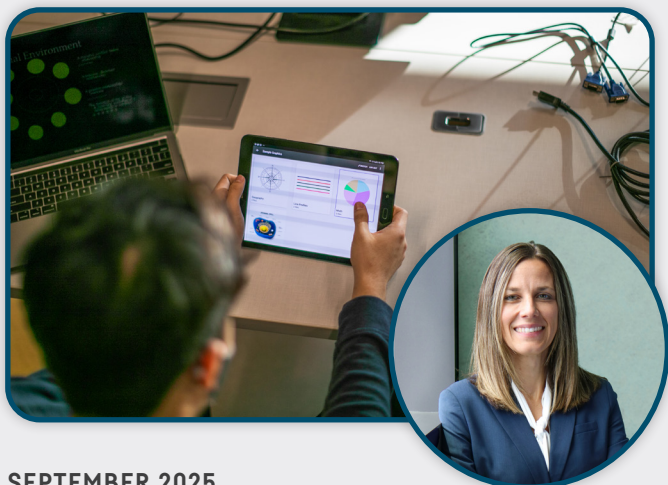


Learn more about opportunities for Corporate Partnerships at slsc.org/corporate-partners.



Saint Louis Science Center EINSTEIN SOCIETY

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR EINSTEIN SOCIETY MEMBERS



SEPTEMBER 2025

Science on the Move: Tour of the CHROME Lab at Saint Louis University*

See the latest ideas emerging in a place where engineers, educators, and clinical practitioners work collaboratively to create new technologies that augment human capabilities. Marvel at what's possible when haptics (touch and motion technology), robotics, and mechatronics come together.

** This tour will be led by Science Center Board of Trustees member Dr. Jenna Gorlewicz. Space will be limited.*



NOVEMBER 2025

Einstein Society Reception

Start the season of giving with us as we gather at the Science Center to celebrate the generosity that makes our mission possible. Festive food and drinks will be matched with informal STEM learning for adults.



Learn more about the Einstein Society
at slsc.org/einstein-society.





Science on the Move: Einstein Society Members Experience Local Innovation at Stereotaxis

In March, members of the Science Center’s Einstein Society gathered for a behind-the-scenes tour of Stereotaxis, a St. Louis pioneer and leader in innovative surgical robotics pushing the boundaries of technology and healthcare. The event was the first in the Science Center’s new *Science on the Move* series connecting Einstein Society members with innovation and discoveries emerging across our region.

During the tour of Stereotaxis’ global headquarters in St. Louis, guests met company leaders and learned about the company’s surgical robotic systems advancing precision, safety, and patient care. Visiting the spaces where design, physician support, and manufacturing take place all under one roof, Einstein Society members also had the chance to operate Stereotaxis’ Robotic Magnetic Navigation technology, which physicians are using around the world.

“We found it terrific, informative and compelling,” noted one attendee. “All the things the Science Center represents in the community.”





DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

BJC HealthCare**Inspiring the Next Generation
of Innovators and Helping Make
Science Accessible for All**

As one of the St. Louis region's most significant players in the fields of medical care and research, BJC HealthCare is committed to advancing health and STEM for a brighter future.

Earlier this year, the Science Center was proud to welcome BJC HealthCare as a corporate sponsor supporting key initiatives aimed at expanding STEM education, promoting healthcare innovation, and fostering community engagement. The collaboration aligns with BJC's mission to advance health and wellness while investing in the next generation of STEM professionals.

"Great institutions don't just serve a community; they uplift it. BJC HealthCare's dedication to service, accountability, and gratitude mirrors our own mission at the Science Center—to ignite curiosity, expand knowledge, and make science accessible to all," says Nate Pedigo, the Science Center's Senior Director of Institutional Giving. "When organizations with a shared purpose come together, the result isn't just collaboration—it's transformation."

With this partnership, BJC HealthCare continues to impact everything from education to community engagement—a perfect synergy with the Science Center's STEM education efforts, which reached more than 637,000 people in 2024.

BJC's collaboration will encourage young minds to explore careers in healthcare, science, and innovation; and it will strengthen BJC's relationship with local families, educators, and professionals working in STEM fields.



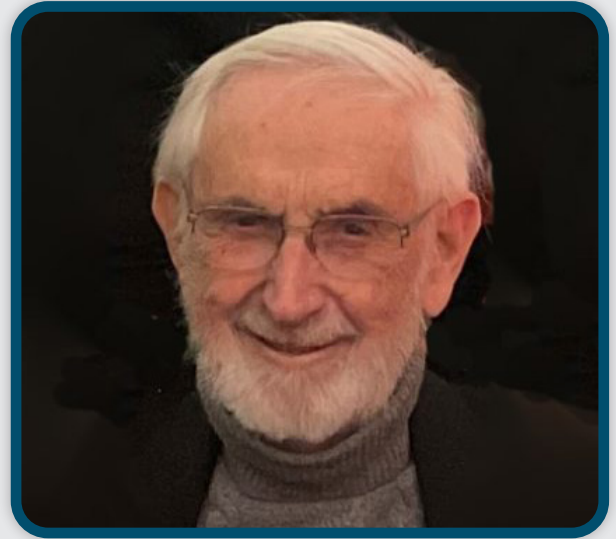
"BJC HealthCare's commitment to wellness extends beyond our hospital campuses, clinics, and offices directly into the communities we serve with education and resources to inspire the next generation of health scientists," says Dr. Christopher Miller, Chief Clinical Officer of BJC HealthCare. "We are excited to be a part of this program and effort."

BJC HealthCare's generous partnership will support Science Center programs and offerings that showcase innovation in medical health.

In addition to being the local presenting collaborator for the OMNIMAX® Theater's Superhuman Body documentary film, BJC HealthCare will support SciFest events in 2025 and 2026, as well as the STL for All program providing free Science Center memberships to underserved families through community partner organizations like the Urban League, YMCA, and Mission St. Louis.

At events like SciFest and the Science Center's STL for All Day, BJC employees will also have opportunities to volunteer and engage with families, students, and educators through hands-on STEM activities.

"Healthcare is more than just treatment—it's about education, innovation, and building healthier communities," says Bobby Sanderson, Chief Institutional Advancement Officer at the Science Center. "BJC HealthCare stands apart in our region as a leader in not only medical excellence but also in investing in the future of health and science. Their commitment to education and wellness extends beyond hospital walls, shaping a healthier St. Louis for generations to come."



In Memoriam: Charles W. "Chuck" Oertli

The Saint Louis Science Center team was saddened to learn that Charles W. "Chuck" Oertli passed away on March 23, 2025. Mr. Oertli served on the inaugural Board of Trustees of the Saint Louis Science Center. Oertli was also instrumental as part of a Campaign Executive Committee in helping to raise the funds that launched the Saint Louis Science Center's \$34 million expansion across Highway 40.

A native of St. Louis, Chuck Oertli began his career in electrical engineering in 1952, when he joined General Electric after graduating from the University of Colorado, Boulder with a degree in electrical engineering. Oertli began his career at Guarantee Electrical as a project manager in 1954, and in 1972, he succeeded his father as president & CEO. In 2001, he became chairman.

In addition to his philanthropic work on behalf of the Science Center, Mr. Oertli also served on many other boards and supported many organizations, including all the other entities that comprise the Zoo Museum District, as well as the South County YMCA, Deaconess Hospital, and more.

"Our community is a better place because Chuck Oertli and his wife, Sue, cared deeply about preserving the past and investing in the future," said Major Gifts Officer Noël Schiber. "The Science Center sees the dividends of Chuck's foundational support every day in the joyful moments of wonder and sparks of inspiration our guests experience."

Oertli's family has asked that tributes in his name be made to the Science Center (slsc.org/tribute) or to the Danforth Plant Science Center.

From all of us at the Saint Louis Science Center, we wish to extend our deepest sympathies to the Oertli family and their friends, as well as the community.



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SAVE THE DATE

WONDER

A Quantum Blast

Saturday, October 4, 2025

A night to celebrate and support the Saint Louis Science Center's mission and ignite the scientist in all of us!

Please contact Gina Baker at gina.baker@slsc.org or 314.289.4477
for information on tickets and sponsorship opportunities.