



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Institute of Museum and Library Services funds STEM-based early learning initiative for three cultural organizations

Program is anticipated to serve 2,600 children from low-income households during the three-year project

Denver, CO – The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded a \$148,000 Museums for America grant to partially fund a three-year initiative, Growing Scientists: Sparking STEM in Early Childhood, which provides science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs to underserved children in the Denver-metro area.

The award to the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus is shared with Butterfly Pavilion and Denver Botanic Gardens, and benefits children from seven Title I schools within Denver Public Schools and Adams 12 Five Star Schools.

Growing Scientists was developed 12 years ago in response to teachers and school district administrators who expressed a need to provide stronger early STEM opportunities for underserved children in the Denver-metro area. Data collected at state and national levels support this need, indicating that children are falling short in math and science standardized tests. This is particularly pronounced for children from disadvantaged families, who face an ever-widening achievement gap linked to family income levels.

Growing Scientists works to counter these trends by offering early elementary physical, life and earth science support. From October 2015 through September 2018, the project will deliver direct services to students, teachers and families through in-class educational outreach sessions, field trips with busing, teacher professional development, classroom supplies and materials, Family Science Nights and free annual family passes.

Providing gainful opportunities for children from low-income households to learn about STEM-based principles in hands-on, engaging ways has long been a focus of the Children's Museum. Offered in partnership with Butterfly Pavilion and Denver Botanic Gardens, the Growing Scientists program will positively impact students' attitudes toward STEM subjects and career possibilities, better support teachers and engage families in their children's STEM learning.

"IMLS support of the Growing Scientists program is tremendous," Amy Burt, the Museum's Vice President of Development and Communications, said. "With it, Butterfly Pavilion, Denver Botanic Gardens and the Children's Museum will be able to continue to offer a unique STEM program designed specifically for early learners. We're thrilled with the support, the partnership and the program."

The program is poised to continuously develop, as Growing Scientists will gradually phase in more sophisticated evaluation tools to gauge program impact and measure success in achieving the program's intended outcomes. Data gleaned from the process will be used to improve Growing Scientists in the future and inform replication efforts in other communities.

About the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus

The mission of the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus is to create extraordinary experiences that champion the wonder and joy of childhood. They believe in kid-powered learning and every day, their expertly designed exhibits and programs open doors for Colorado's curious young minds to express what they know and to discover, create and explore more - on their own terms.

Since 1973, the Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus has served the metro-Denver community as a learning institute dedicated to the education and growth of young children and their caregivers. The Museum provides rich play experiences and a dynamic learning environment for children to joyously learn through innovative and interactive hands-on exhibits, engaging daily programming and year-round special events. Last year, they served more than 359,000 children and their grown-ups.

The Children's Museum of Denver at Marsico Campus is a 501(c)(3), private non-profit organization, and a Tier II SCFD member.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 35,000 museums. Our mission is to inspire libraries and museums to advance innovation, lifelong learning, and cultural and civic engagement. Our grant making, policy development, and research help libraries and museums deliver valuable services that make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive. To learn more, visit www.ims.gov and follow IMLS on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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About Butterfly Pavilion

Founded in July 1995, as the first stand-alone non-profit invertebrate zoo in the nation, Butterfly Pavilion is an AZA accredited 30,000 square foot facility situated on an 11-acre campus provided by the

City of Westminster, Colorado. The mission of Butterfly Pavilion is to foster an appreciation of butterflies and other invertebrates while educating the public about the need for conservation of threatened habitats in the tropics and around the world.

About Denver Botanic Gardens

Green inside and out, Denver Botanic Gardens began in 1951 and is considered one of the top botanical gardens in the United States and a pioneer in water conservation. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Gardens' living collections encompass specimens from the tropics to the tundra, showcasing a plant palette chosen to thrive in Colorado's semi-arid climate. The Gardens is a dynamic, 24-acre urban oasis in the heart of the city, offering unforgettable opportunities to flourish with unique garden experiences for the whole family – as well as world-class education and plant conservation research programs. Additional sites extend this experience throughout the Front Range: Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield is a 750-acre native plant refuge with an active farm in Jefferson County; Mount Goliath is a high-altitude trail and interpretive site on the Mount Evans Scenic Byway. For more information, visit us online at www.botanicgardens.org.

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