Members, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe, healthy and continuing to learn. During these challenging times, your vital support enables the California Science Center to continue inspiring science learning in everyone as a trusted educational resource - THANK YOU!

Though the temporary closure of the California Science Center in mid-March in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the loss of nearly all sources of earned income (revenue that would come from special exhibition and IMAX movie ticket sales, gift shop and concession purchases, facility rentals and education program fees) our commitment to science learning for everyone remains strong!

All departments are working collaboratively with our leadership and with a heightened focus to fulfill our mission to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning. Contributions from our Members and donors are more important now than ever, and your generosity will be essential to the Science Center’s resiliency and recovery.

We are finding innovative approaches to engage the community in science learning, such as the new Stuck at Home Science online activity series that is featured in this issue, and Creature Features on social media that highlight the work of our living collections team who provide on-site animal care and operate critical life-support systems in the Ecosystems exhibit wing, including the Kelp Forest and other living environments.

During this period of uncertainty, we are pleased to provide special insights to our Members about how we are continuing our mission and we invite you to stay connected through weekly distributions of The Nucleus.
Stuck at Home Science, developed in a collaboration of the California Science Center’s content experts, educators and professional development team, is an online series of hands-on and age-appropriate science activities using supplies you can find at home. Activities feature videos and downloadable lessons that support the Next Generation Science Standards Science and Engineering Practices.

“The Science Center’s mission is to make science learning accessible for everyone and we are meeting it while we are closed to the public. Stuck at Home Science activities provide a fun and educational way to help parents and students continue science learning even when they can’t physically come to the Science Center.” – Jeffrey Rudolph, California Science Center President and CEO

Each week covers a themed content goal – such as rocketry, food science or engineering. This week’s theme, Ooze-rageous, is especially fun and guaranteed to gross out your family. New activities are released every weekday at 10:00 a.m. PST. Bookmark the Stuck at Home Science page for FREE unlimited access to exciting videos and activity guides that are easy to understand and available in both English and Spanish.

Having fun learning with Stuck at Home Science? Send photos of you and your family doing the activities to member@californiasciencecenter.org for an opportunity to be featured in an upcoming issue of The Nucleus and on our Member News & Events page.
Monica Barajas is an educator at the California Science Center who began her career over 15 years ago as a University of Southern California undergraduate student, participating in a work study program that allowed her to work part-time in the education department at the Science Center to help pay for educational and living expenses. Today, Monica is in charge of the Science Center’s Big Lab Field Trips for pre-K through 8th grade school groups. She is also the scientist featured in The Big Boom!, the explosive first video of the Stuck at Home Science series.

“The Stuck at Home Science series is a valuable learning resource for students and families, especially during this time when all residents statewide and beyond are learning and working at home.”

Monica’s heroes include USC professors who inspired her to teach science and Bill Nye The Science Guy (who is a generous, longstanding California Science Center Member and donor). One of the biggest influences in Monica’s life is her father who considers Monica a resident scientist. Just recently, his observations of the hummingbird feeder outside his window at different times of the day led to a fun and lively discussion about temperature, evaporation and condensation.

Monica’s favorite scientific fields are biology and chemistry, where much of the learning comes through experimentation. She wants all students to realize that it’s okay for experiments to fail – in fact, failure is an important part of the learning process. The key is to build on what you learn from each trial and to keep trying until you succeed.

All of the educators at the Science Center encourage hands-on, inquiry-based activities as a fun and memorable way to learn science. They call this the “80/20 approach” where 80% of the learning experience is hands-on experimentation and 20% is instruction that ties the experiments together with the underlying scientific theory or concept being learned.
“What I love most about being an educator is interacting with students and seeing their expressions when the light bulb clicks on!”

If you’ve had the pleasure of meeting Monica in person or seeing her in The Big Boom!, you will be surprised to learn that Monica is very introverted. It is her enthusiasm for science learning that unleashes her expressive side with her showman’s antics. Outside of work, Monica likes quiet time with her family, friends and dog and loves playing slow pitch softball for five different teams.

One of Monica’s favorite things about the California Science Center is that general admission is FREE and is grateful to our Members and donors for your help sustaining the educational programs and exhibits that make the Science Center a world-class science learning resource. During this period, when the Science Center is closed and many of us are at home, Monica is proud of the way the Education team and all departments at the California Science Center are working together toward a common goal. She is also pleased that the Science Center’s videos and online resources showcase and highlight the Science Center’s diversity reflecting our broad and diverse audience while advancing our mission to stimulate curiosity and inspire science learning in everyone.

In the next issue of The Nucleus we will meet astrophysicist Devin Waller, the California Science Center’s Exhibit Project Manager who works with our Air and Space Exhibits, including Space Shuttle Endeavour, and plans for the future Samuel Oschin Air and Space Center!
During these challenging and uncertain times, your support as a Member is critical to our ability to continue serving our community with free online science learning opportunities and prepare to ultimately reopen our doors to the public. Please renew your Membership today in support of our mission to inspire science learning in everyone.

Make science learning at home FUN with our cool Stuck at Home Science activity kits! Members receive 10% off all web orders throughout the month of April, as well as free shipping on all orders $25 and over. Use promo code: MemberApr20 at checkout.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT SCIENCE LEARNING FOR EVERYONE

If your Membership is not due for renewal and you are in a position to make an additional gift, of any amount, we invite your contribution. Your generous support will help sustain California Science Center as a trusted educational resource while we are