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Civic Leaders Announce Unprecedented Year-Long Initiative: World's Largest Science Celebration

Science Chicago: Life's a Lab brings together top organizations in an unprecedented collaboration to offer 12 months of programming and focus on the future of region

CHICAGO [July 29, 2008] –Today Chicago's leading scientific, academic, corporate and non-profit institutions gathered to announce plans for the world's largest science celebration, scheduled to launch this fall. Dubbed Science Chicago: Life's a Lab, this ambitious collaboration of more than 100 partners will allow city and suburban residents of all ages to awaken their inner scientist and discover the scientific resources of the region.

With an official kick-off date set for mid-September, Jonathan Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation, David Mosen, President and CEO of the Museum of Science and Industry, Terry Mazany, President and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust, and Walter Massey, Ph.D., President Emeritus of Morehouse College and former head of the National Science Foundation, today announced a year-long slate of programs aimed at engaging the region in science and raising awareness of the importance of science education.

Chicago has long been a leader in scientific innovation: home to two premier national laboratories, several major research universities and countless world-class scientists, as well as the birthplace of the world's first nuclear reaction, the first cellular phone and one of the world's tallest skyscrapers. Science Chicago aims to engage, excite and educate the next generation of scientists by establishing the critical value of science and mathematics education, providing opportunities to support classroom learning, and highlighting the world-class scientific resources and work being done in the Chicago region.

The initiative, which is funded, in part, by the generous support of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is committed to increasing the region's science literacy and appreciation.

"Science Chicago, a year of hundreds of inter-related activities and events, will reach out to people across our region. It will educate, inspire, and change lives. And we believe its effects will be felt long after the year is over," said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton. "We hope to raise awareness of how science and technology have shaped Chicago, to underscore how essential science is to our everyday lives, and to help the public better understand the process of science and the important issues raised by science."

More than a year of planning has gone into the initiative, with a leadership committee comprised of the region's major thought leaders who created a strong strategic vision. The project is guided by a diverse, high-level Board of Advisors of civic, academic, corporate and non-profit

leaders. The Board is led by co-chairs Dr. Walter Massey and Art Sussman, Vice President of the MacArthur Foundation. David Mosenia is the Board's vice-chair. Leon Lederman, Ph.D., Nobel Laureate and Pritzker Professor of Science at Illinois Institute of Technology, chairs the Science Council whose members are some of Chicago's most preeminent scientists.

Funding has also been provided by The Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, which seeks to support programs that help improve the lives of the people in metropolitan Chicago. "Our participation in Science Chicago is more than a commitment of funds, it is a commitment to providing resources that will not only encourage more people to participate in science, but could have long-term benefits for the continued economic viability of our community and work force," said Terry Mazany, President and CEO of The Chicago Community Trust. "We look forward to watching the Chicago community come together and experience science in a whole new light."

"Science Chicago will demonstrate that science isn't just something learned in a class or a lab, but is something that happens all around us and has real impact on our lives," Mosenia said. "It will offer a year's worth of exciting events all designed to build enthusiasm for the pursuit of science, expose students to science careers and raise the importance of science education among parents, teachers and the public."

In addition to the principal support of the MacArthur Foundation along with The Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, the program is also made possible through the generous financial support of Abbott, the Boeing Company, Illinois Tool Works Inc., and Motorola. The Museum of Science and Industry, which is spearheading the initiative, and more than 100 additional partners have also come together to offer a vast number of programs for every audience in many Chicago neighborhoods and the suburbs. Science Chicago works in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools to create programs that benefit teachers, students and parents.

Science Chicago programming will provide hands-on learning, spur thoughtful debate, enhance classroom learning and build enthusiasm for the continued pursuit of cutting-edge science. Activities will range from behind-the-scenes tours of some of Chicago's high-level science facilities not normally open to the public to conversations with leading scientists on critical issues of the day to tours of everyday places and locations viewed through a scientific lens. In short, Science Chicago will illustrate its tagline: "Life's a Lab." A programming calendar will be available in late August.

On almost every day from September 2008 through August 2009, people in the Chicago area will discover something new about science. Whether it's young people learning about new technologies, teachers finding ways to make their classroom instruction more engaging, or adults debating the latest medical research, Science Chicago will be bursting at the seams with programs designed to not only involve people in the thrill of science, but also provide a platform to showcase Chicago's unique position as a leading science city.

Highlights of upcoming Science Chicago programming include Science Saturdays, Science Conversations, and Neighborhood LabFests, as well as the digital programs Find a Scientist! and Teachers' Lounge, which will launch in September on www.sciencechicago.com.

Science Saturdays: On select Saturdays, local scientists and educators give Chicagoans an all-access pass to top scientific locations to explore behind-the-scenes at research laboratories, local ecosystems and nature preserves, industries and universities.

Science Conversations: Top innovators, scientists and researchers engage young people and adults in a series of conversations, town hall meetings, panel discussions, and debates about contemporary scientific and technological issues, from global warming to genetic engineering.

Neighborhood LabFests: Science festivals throughout spring and summer 2009 hosted at Chicago public schools, local parks, libraries, neighborhoods and region-wide festivals bring hands-on science learning opportunities to Chicago-area communities.

Find A Scientist! and Teachers Lounge: Two online teacher resources allow Chicago-area teachers to identify experts to provide real-world science experiences to their students as well as professional development opportunities, field trips, and materials to enrich science lessons.

Summer Science Challenge

To get a jump start on the fun, Science Chicago officials challenged Chicago youth to spend the summer discovering science in their own backyard. Whether it's on vacation with their family, reading a science-focused book on the Chicago Public Library's summer reading list or seeing how the world works in their own neighborhood, Science Chicago is challenging young people to get out and explore.

This summer, the Science Chicago Web site, www.sciencechicago.com, offers youth a diverse list of cool science activities they can do on their own or with friends and family as well as a place to log their science experiments and report on their discoveries via email, digital photos or video. Among other contributors, Rabiah Mayas, Ph.D., Science Director for Science Chicago, will write a blog, "Ask Dr. Rabiah," in which she will offer tips, updates on the latest science news and ask youth to weigh in with their thoughts and attitudes on various science topics. The full Web site will be officially launched prior to the Science Chicago kick off in September.

About Science Chicago

Science Chicago is a year-long collaborative public engagement initiative led by the Museum of Science and Industry and conducted with the support of more than 100 partner organizations. For more information, visit www.sciencechicago.com.

About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. More information is at www.macfound.org.

About The Chicago Community Trust

The Chicago Community Trust and affiliates form the region's community foundation, helping local residents manage their charitable giving. Founded in 1915, the Trust is a union of numerous gifts, bequests and other contributions totaling more than \$1.8 billion. Income from these assets provides more than \$114 million annually in grants to agencies that improve the lives of the residents of our region through arts funding, community development, education improvement, health and wellness and to assure that basic human needs are met for all members of our community. Learn more about the Trust at www.cct.org.

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