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**NEW FILM PREMIERING
IN IMAX**

**THE SHED
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**SPRING SKY
EVENTS**



Explorations

Spring 2025 A Publication of the Maryland Science Center



***New Programs Create
New Ways To Love Science***

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

All That We Do

I have to admit: it's sometimes challenging to explain to a potential Maryland Science Center partner or supporter all that we do. I have no trouble stating our mission and our impact; every day, in every activity and endeavor, we inspire curiosity and discovery. We celebrate science and the scientific process. We spark the imagination of children and their families, and provide opportunities for them to experiment and explore, succeed and fail, learn and grow.

But to concisely describe all that we do? That's tough—because what the Maryland Science Center does is so extensive and so diverse that it seems like it would take a magazine to illustrate the wide variety of experiences we offer.

This issue of *Explorations* may just be that magazine. These pages are filled with examples of all that we do.

You'll read about the exciting new hands-on experiences being developed as part of our \$10 million *Inspire, Empower and Engage: Transforming Our Future* Campaign. Our expanded *Shed* will open in late fall (read about it on page 3) and our visitors are already seeing the impact of this monumental campaign: decades-old exhibit components in *Dinosaur Mysteries* are being replaced with new equipment, creating a more current and robust learning environment.

Developing meaningful partnerships are a key component to our success in creating exciting programs. The story on page 2 about our new IMAX film debuting in May is a fantastic example; thanks to our relationship with Maryland Public Television, this new film will soon be available to our visitors.

On page 4, meet Melanie and Jim McHugh, wonderful and committed volunteers and donors. Their steadfast support and commitment, like that of so many others, enables us to increase access to our museum and programs through free and discounted admissions for residents throughout Maryland.

This issue also recaps our recent special events and previews our upcoming Solstice gala. In everything we do, we aim to engage children, families, and adults—anyone and everyone with a desire to explore, learn, and have fun.

So read on. Be inspired. Learn about all that we do. And please: join us! Come visit the museum. Volunteer. Look into ways that you can support the programs that interest you. We welcome you to our community.



Mark J. Potter
President and CEO

We are the Maryland Science Center.
We inspire. We empower. We engage.

Let's science



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New IMAX Film Explores Maryland By Air

From the picturesque western mountains to the tranquil Eastern Shore... from pastoral farmlands to bustling metropolitan areas... Maryland is beautiful and diverse—especially from above.

Beginning in May, Maryland Science Center visitors can experience the wonder of our state in the awe-inspiring experience of our St. John Properties IMAX Theater when *Maryland by Air*, a new IMAX film

produced by Maryland Public Television (MPT), will premiere and join the rotation of regular films shown in IMAX.

This breathtaking film was shot from the air by helicopters and drones over the course of a year in order to capture Maryland in all four seasons. *Maryland by Air* is narrated by legendary Marylander Cal Ripken Jr. and includes an inspiring musical score.

Maryland by Air takes viewers on a soaring aerial tour of the Antietam Battlefield, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge, Fort McHenry, and the Maryland State House. Viewers will have a birds-eye view of elegant and historic communities in Annapolis, Baltimore, Southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore, plus enjoy stunning footage of Ocean City, Deep Creek Lake, and the wild ponies of Assateague Island.

“Having the world premiere of *Maryland by Air* at the Maryland Science Center’s St. John Properties IMAX Theater is a truly immersive way to unveil this MPT original production to residents of our state,” said Maryland Public Television Station Manager Steven Schupak. “We’re grateful for this partnership with the Science Center and the opportunity for people to experience Maryland’s magnificent landmarks in stunning detail from an aerial viewpoint.”

Check out the schedule of all our IMAX films at www.mdsci.org/imax.

Access Science

Our new initiative allowing anyone holding a Maryland SNAP or Maryland WIC card to purchase up to four tickets to the Science Center for \$5 per person is already a huge success! To date, we’ve welcomed visitors through this program from 20 of the 24 Maryland counties. Visit www.mdsci.org/access for more information!

Kids Room

Red and yellow and pink and green... and science! Each month, our educators guide children as they explore a different color and some easy-to-understand science related to that hue. It’s a great time for our youngest visitors to have fun made in the shade!



Inspire, Empower, and Engage



Update on the Shed Expansion

The \$10 million *Inspire, Empower and Engage: Transforming Our Future* Campaign will significantly enhance the Maryland Science Center's visitor experience, facilities, and hands-on programs. The first upgrades are being made to the *Dinosaur Mysteries* exhibit, including new mechanisms and screens for the well-loved interactive activities. Exhibit planners and educators are

finalizing exciting plans for the new 5,000 sq. ft. exhibit about Space opening this fall.

The first prominent, transformative feature from the initiative will be the relocation and expansion of *The Shed* maker space to the second floor of the museum in the fall. Jesse Turnbull has been the manager of *The Shed* since 2023 and provided insight into the planning process for the new space, and what MSC visitors can expect.

The new *Shed* will be named in honor of The Kahlert Foundation in recognition of its \$1 million grant.

Jesse, why is the Shed moving?

The Shed was created 11 years ago as a proof of concept. We asked, what is this place? Will people want to sit down and work on a more involved activity? Can we provide materials and assistance to guests to make a fun project?

The Shed has proven to be a very popular destination and we have answered those questions. We've also found that the guests are hungry for more—more exploration, more hands-on activities. With this move, we're providing more room for more guests as well as space for new and exciting activities.

What were the considerations in designing the new Shed space?

We want the new *Shed* to feel inviting, big, and bright. We want to keep the personal hands-on interaction that we currently have while expanding our possibilities and providing fun new projects. Most of our tables, benches, and tools will be on wheels so we can change the layout of the space depending on what our visitors are working on each day.

As well as providing room for exploration, we'll also show off projects that visitors have made in the past. It's also very important that the new *Shed* be accessible to everyone. The new tables can change height, making it easier for everyone to enjoy the activity together.

What will visitors be able to do in the new space that may not have been available before?

My favorite thing is hearing a smiling child say "this is the first time I've used this." We want everyone to be able to join in age-appropriate activities by being introduced to new tools and materials. We can do this with the larger space and more resources. We intend to bring in bigger tools, like scroll saws, to make fun projects. We can also explore more collaborative projects in the open floorplan and will be able to partition the new space into two distinct areas. This will let us host workshops on one side of the *Shed* while offering an activity for all visitors on the other.

Visitors will also see new toys and gizmos, especially saws, drills, and screwdrivers. We don't want guests to miss out on learning how to properly swing a hammer but, at the same time, we're looking to the future of making with new power tools, 3D printers and laser cutters. We hope to find a nice balance of new and old tech.



For the McHughs, Supporting MSC is Personal and Professional

Some donors support the Maryland Science Center because of a personal connection to STEM content. Often, donors want to further the Science Center's goal of celebrating science to further lifelong curiosity and exploration. For others, it's a good business decision.

For Melanie and Jim McHugh, it's all of the above.

"Introducing the next generation of leaders to science and STEM resonates with us," says Jim, Vice Chair of the Maryland Science Center Board of Trustees and Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer at Constellation. "My background is in engineering and Melanie's is in social work so the Science Center blends our interests and commitment. We're always looking for ways to reinvest in science education. MSC creates opportunities that may spark an interest in children that may lead to a career in STEM."

Melanie and Jim especially appreciate "how accessible Maryland Science Center programs are for students and families from all communities" says Melanie. "We value the reach and access—reach beyond the Inner Harbor to bring programs to every county in Maryland, and access through free admission for Maryland school groups and discounts for low-income families."

"We're also always impressed with the Science Center staff," adds Jim. "You can feel their passion in creating entertaining and educational experiences." They create a great vibe for fun, interesting, and comfortable ways to see how science works."

Melanie continues, "We're thinking about the next generation of leaders and scientists tackling the challenges we're going to face. How do we prepare them with the problem solving skill sets they'll need to meet those challenges?"

Jim and Melanie have answered that question through their personal commitment to the Maryland Science Center and through Jim's advocacy for support from Constellation. The company "has found meaningful ways to participate," in Jim's words—from *Science Beyond the Classroom Powered by Constellation* free fieldtrip admission for Maryland school groups, to sponsoring the *Power Up!* exhibit which opened in 2014, to the *Sacks for Science* partnership with the Baltimore Ravens.



Solstice Gala: Mark Your Calendar and Show Your Support

Be part of one of Baltimore's most fun—and most important!—events of the year: the Maryland Science Center's annual Solstice gala. Join hundreds of local luminaries and party people for a gourmet bites, specialty cocktails and open bar, live band, spirited dancing, and rooftop DJ spinning favorite tunes.

And you can take pride in knowing that all proceeds from the event support free museum admission for Maryland students and their teachers visiting on field trips, and the Traveling Science Program outreach in communities throughout Maryland.

Sponsorship opportunities at all levels are available! For more information about Solstice sponsorship, contact Jada Hill at 410.545.5943 or jhill@mdsci.org.

For information about Solstice, visit mdsci.org/solstice.

**Saturday, June 21, 2025
8 pm to Midnight**

Winter at the Science Center

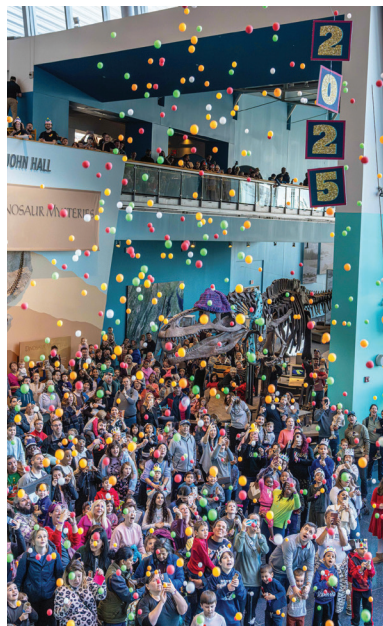
Snow Days

The holiday season at the Maryland Science Center was snow much fun! Families shared the joy of the season—and the joy of learning!—by exploring c-c-c-cold weather activities with bubbles, hot cocoa, and snow (as snowmen, snowflakes and snow skating). The break from school was the perfect time to try something cool!



Astro Adventure Day

Visitors travelled beyond Earth in February with experiments and projects where they could land a spacecraft, collect space dust, and explore what it would be like to work in outer space.



Midnight Noon

It's a Science Center tradition—and always a fun way for children to ring in the New Year with their parents and grandparents. At Midnight Noon on December 31, the Rainbow Rock band provided lively music for singing and dancing, our educators led families in festive activities, and at the stroke of noon, our atrium was filled with balls and buoyant shouts as visitors celebrated the New Year.



Science Trivia Crawl

It was a mid-February scavenger hunt. It was science trivia. It was a night of craft beers and camaraderie among the Science Center exhibits. And it was the most recent event in our popular series of adult programs. Visit www.mdsci.org/adults to see upcoming events.

Look Up! Upcoming Sky Moments

Things—and people—will be looking up this Spring. In the coming months, the sky will be filled with celestial events that you can enjoy from a nearby dark location and from your yard.

April 21: Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation

Mercury is at its farthest Western separation from the Sun in our sky. Look for Mercury just before sunrise on the eastern horizon. It can be found following Venus which is the brightest object in that area of the sky.

April 22-23: Lyrids Meteor Shower

Around 5am on April 22nd and April 23rd the meteor shower will be almost directly above in the sky which is the best time to view it. This shower can be found near the brightest star in the northeastern sky, Vega.

See what's in the stars in the latest **StarMap** at www.mdsci.org/starmap.

May 6-7: Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower

Look to the eastern horizon a couple hours before sunrise for a chance to see a meteor shower. This shower is active from April 19th to May 28th with the peak number of meteors reaching nearly 40 meteors per hour on May 6th.

May 31: Venus at Greatest Western Elongation

Venus will be living up to its name as the Morning Star as it reaches its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky as it reaches its greatest eastern elongation of 45.9 degrees from the Sun. Find it rising brightly into the eastern sky a couple hours before sunrise.

Do Try This at Home

Faux Fossil

Materials

- Sponge
- Medium Bowl
- Plate
- 1 cup of warm water
- 1/3 cup Epsom salt + a little extra
Epsom salt is another name for magnesium sulfate, a naturally occurring mineral.

Make a mineral bath

1. Pour the warm water into a bowl.
2. Add the Epsom salt and stir well. If all of the salt dissolves, add more until you can no longer mix it in and a little salt remains at the bottom of the bowl. This ensures that your water is supersaturated with the magnesium sulfate.

Soak it up

3. If you'd like, use scissors to cut your sponge into a bone shape.
4. Place the sponge in the bowl and allow it to soak up as much of the solution as it can.
5. Pick up the sponge and place it on a plate. Make sure you don't squeeze the sponge or wring it out!

Dry it out

6. Allow the sponge to dry completely. This may take a few days.
7. Once the sponge is dry, pick it up and make some observations. Compare it to a normal dry sponge or one that has just been dipped in water. How are they similar? How are they different?



What's happening?

Fossils are the preserved remains of plants and animals from long ago. Some fossils form when the remains of an animal or plant are covered with water. Minerals carried by the water are then able to fill in all of the open spaces within that plant or animal. This process is called permineralization. This type of fossilization is particularly helpful to scientists because it can preserve internal structures and organs, rather than simply getting an imprint of the organism.

In this experiment, the sponge represents a bone that has been buried. When you dip the sponge in the salty water it absorbs the liquid. As the sponge dries out, the water evaporates leaving the minerals (magnesium sulfate) behind.

Visit www.mdsci.org/science-at-home for additional science at home adventures!

Plan Now for Our Children's Future

You can have an impact today on our children's future tomorrow. A legacy gift to the Maryland Science Center, such as a bequest or proceeds from a retirement plan or life insurance, ensures that we can continue to bring our unique brand of informal science education to more children, in more ways, for more years to come.

Your support of our mission and programs, and your statement of intent to provide that support, will allow us to share the joy of science to the next generation of explorers.

For information about giving opportunities, contact Marty Perreault at 410.545.5970 or mperreault@mdsci.org, or visit www.mdsci.org/legacy to learn more.



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Field Trips are Free for all MD Schools!

Enrich your students' science education with a field trip to the Maryland Science Center! Thanks to *Science Beyond the Classroom*, *Powered by Constellation*, as well as the MD Dept of Education, public and private funders, and our generous donors, field trips are free for all Maryland school groups. Visit www.mdsci.org/fieldtrips to book today!

Mark Your Calendar!

Check out the full schedule of events, programs and special activities at the Maryland Science Center.
Visit www.mdsci.org

STAY CONNECTED



Visit our Facebook page for glimpses into what visitors, students and families are doing.

[Facebook.com/MarylandScienceCenter](https://www.facebook.com/MarylandScienceCenter)



Check out our Science Shorts, learn about our STEM Awards winners, and more.

[Youtube.com/MDScienceCenter](https://www.youtube.com/MDScienceCenter)



See it for yourself – photos of everything we're doing.

[Instagram.com/MDScienceCenter](https://www.instagram.com/MDScienceCenter)

Dino Day

April 12 | Noon - 4 PM

Uncover fossils and explore the tools and techniques used by scientists to unravel the mysteries of prehistoric creatures.

www.mdsci.org/dino-day

Grown Up Field Trip: Nickelodeon Night

April 25 | 7 - 10 PM

Let your childhood dreams come true with activities inspired by favorite Nickelodeon game shows.

www.mdsci.org/adults

Glass Art: Resin Wave

May 18 | 1 - 3:30 PM

Work with and curate resin to create a unique and captivating seascape in this hands-on STEM workshop.

www.mdsci.org/stem-workshops