

## Annual San Diego Science Festival to Host Countywide“Excite Your Mind” Events March 20-27, 2010

March 5, 2010

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The largest celebration of science on the West Coast, held annually in San Diego, promises to once again "excite the minds" of thousands of students and their families March 20-27. In 2010, the San Diego Science Festival (SDSF) will continue to raise awareness on the importance of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education among San Diego's youth to inspire them to pursue careers in these rewarding fields.

"The goal of the San Diego Science Festival is to create highly memorable, exciting and interactive experiences for students and their families that demonstrate the remarkable career possibilities in science and technology," noted Loren Thompson, assistant vice chancellor for Student Educational Advancement at the University of California, San Diego. The university is organizer of the annual science celebration; the lead sponsor is Life Technologies. "The wide variety of programs, events and hands-on exhibits will inspire those of all ages," added Thompson, who is also director of community outreach for the San Diego Science Festival.

The first annual San Diego Science Festival, held in spring 2009, featured activities that reached more than 75,000 individuals-including 50,000 who attended the inaugural all-day Expo at Balboa Park. The 2010 SDSF will feature events such as an eight-person team Rubik's Cube Speed Tournament involving over 45 K-12 schools, Family Day at Balboa Park, Science of Science Fiction, Star Party, The Illusion of Psychic Powers and the free all-day celebration of science-Expo Day-on Saturday, March 27 at PETCO Park, co-hosted by the Padres and the City of San Diego.

The mission of the San Diego Science Festival, organized by UC San Diego with the support of hundreds of community collaborators, is to educate students across the region and inform the public how scientific discoveries influence the quality of their daily lives. In 2009, UC San Diego was awarded a \$3 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to fund the year-round San Diego Science Festival efforts. In addition to the San Diego Science Festival, the NSF grant will be utilized over a three-year period to support three other Festival sites: San Francisco through UC San Francisco; Cambridge, Massachusetts through the MIT Museum; and Philadelphia through The Franklin Institute. The grant also funds the establishment of the national Science Festival Alliance to generate science festival start-ups across the entire nation. San Diego Science Festival 2010 signature events include the following (complete information is available at [www.sdsciencefestival.com](http://www.sdsciencefestival.com)):

**Family Day:** March 20 - Balboa Park - 11am-3pm. Family Day at Balboa Park offers family-friendly science inspired adventures as part of this park-wide event. Together, families can experience a variety of hands on activities including "astronaut for the day" following NASA on their last mission to service the HUBBLE telescope at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center; dig in a mock archaeology pit at the San Diego History Center; use investigative tools while exploring the plants, wildlife and culture inside the Japanese Friendship Garden; walk into an oversize version (9 feet wide, 7 feet tall) of a camera obscura - a device that led to the invention of photography at the MoPA. For a complete schedule including museum hours, admission pricing and discounts, visit [www.balboapark.org](http://www.balboapark.org).

**SDSU Science Sampler:** March 20 - San Diego State University, College of Sciences - 10am-4pm. Helping to kick-off the weeklong San Diego Science Festival, this event offers exciting and interactive experiences for all ages that showcase the remarkable science of greater San Diego. Attendees will experience over 20 interactive demonstrations including liquid nitrogen ice cream, CSI meets CSU, a live virtual exploration of the Santa Margarita River Gorge, hands-on models to demonstrate the properties of earth movement (earthquakes) and viewing sunspots (safely) through telescopes ... just a few of the many activities planned.

**Science of Science Fiction:** March 23 - Neurosciences Institute - 6pm-8pm. Teens and other participants can participate in a question-and-answer panel discussion moderated by Barbara Bry, science fiction enthusiast and associate publisher/executive editor at *San Diego News Network*. Featured will be notable science fiction authors whose works are based on "hard science," including Scott Sigler, *EarthCore*, *Ancestor*, *Contagious*, and *Infected*; Jennifer Oullette from the Science Entertainment Exchange, author of *The Physics of the Buffyverse*; and David Brin, recipient of the Hugo and Nebula Awards, noted futurist and author of the *Uplift Trilogy* and *Tomorrow Happens*.

**The Illusion of Psychic Powers:** March 24 - UC San Diego, Calit2 Auditorium - 6pm-8pm. Magicians have confounded intelligent observers since before the birth of science; they continue to do so today despite the knowledge learned in science and technology. Internationally recognized magician Jamy Ian Swiss will show attendees how an understanding of deception and critical thinking go hand-in-hand.

**Star Party:** March 25 - Reuben H. Fleet Science Center - starts at 6pm. Attendees of all ages will have the chance to peer into the universe through telescopes, rub elbows with NASA engineers and preview the new IMAX documentary based on the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope. Following the movie there will be a hosted "Star Viewing" in Balboa Park supported by the San Diego Astronomy Association. Guest speaker Laura A. Burns will offer a first-hand account of working on the James Webb Space Telescope, the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope.

**FINAL EVENT - Expo Day:** March 27 - PETCO Park - 10am-5pm. This free final San Diego Science Festival event brings together over 150 hands-on science activities and stage performances for people of all ages and interest levels. Attendees will see actual DNA and perform DNA extraction techniques; use their olfactory gland (nose) to identify the organic molecules that create the flavors, aromas, and colors in foods; get an up close look at the science of baseball; and put their forensic skills to the test by solving a mystery, among other activities. Performers will bring science to life with a display of impressive reptiles in "Close Encounters of the Cold Blooded Kind;" the Science of Magic will be revealed as objects disappear; dry ice will be used to create bubbling potions for large-scale theatrical effects; and participants can sing along with the Galapagos Mountain Boys performing scientific-inspired folk songs about the Big Bang, star formation, cosmology, anthropology and more.

Initially inspired by international science festivals that draw crowds in the hundreds of thousands, the goal of the San Diego Science Festival is to increase community awareness of science and inspire our nation's youth to consider entering a science-related education and career. A fitting location, San Diego is at the forefront of scientific research and development, and home to many leading biotechnology and technology corporations. The San Diego Science Festival is partnering with more than 120 collaborators-leading businesses and organizations in the community that offer guidance, financial support and time to help teach the scientific leaders of tomorrow. For a full list of collaborators, visit [www.sdsciencefestival.com/collaborators](http://www.sdsciencefestival.com/collaborators).

The 2010 San Diego Science Festival is made possible by our generous sponsors and individual donors including Life Technologies; the National Science Foundation (NSF); Agilent Technologies Foundation; Gen-Probe Incorporated; Illumina, Inc.; UC San Diego ScienceBridge; KPBS; COX; Celgene; Vertex Pharmaceuticals Incorporated; You CAN Do the Rubik's Cube; Think Blue-City of San Diego; Biogen Idec; Cal-SOAP; *Voice of San Diego*; *San Diego News Network*; NuVasive, Inc.; UC San Diego Extension; QUALCOMM Incorporated; BD Biosciences; SDG&E; [gaslamp.org](http://gaslamp.org); Pfizer; Genomics Institute of the Novartis Research Foundation; SCE-San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station; and the National Defense Industrial Association-San Diego Chapter, among others.

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