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Mayor Faulconer Announces First Science Education Program in All City Libraries

LAUNCH OF ‘SPRING INTO STEAM’ AND CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECT

SAN DIEGO – The San Diego Public Library today announced a new education initiative that offers children in every community of San Diego the opportunity to learn about science and the ecosystem in a series of programs focused on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) subjects. Classes and workshops will be offered during March, April and May at the San Diego Central Library and all 35 branch libraries across the city.

“San Diego’s libraries are centers for learning, and we’re always looking to create more opportunities in our libraries to help our youth get ready for the jobs of tomorrow. With ‘Spring into STEAM,’ we’re giving schoolchildren hands-on training in science, technology, engineering, arts and math in the hopes of inspiring San Diego’s next generation of thinkers, innovators and makers,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. **“The experiences they share through this program are like keys that open up worlds of opportunity.”**

As part of a city-wide effort to train young people for high-paying careers, “Spring Into STEAM” programs are intended for children ages 9 to 12. This year’s theme is “Bug Out!” and six courses will be offered on topics including entomology, beekeeping, solar energy, computer coding, geometry and circuitry. Participants are encouraged to attend all six courses and the awards ceremony on May 13, 2017.

“Spring Into STEAM” is designed to be an annual program, part of the San Diego Public Library’s initiative to make STEAM subjects accessible for youth. All of the library programs are free to participants.

“In keeping with our vision of being ‘the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration’ we wanted to offer science education to all kids in San Diego so they can learn more about their environment and explore the world around them,” said Library Director Misty Jones. **“The ‘Spring**

Into STEAM' program is just the beginning of the new, exciting opportunities that will be available at the San Diego Public Library."

Librarians will teach some of the courses along with several community partners who will provide expertise to support "Spring Into STEAM" programs. They include:

- Entomologist Bill Burkhardt, known as "Bill the Bug Guy," a docent and educator at the Elfin Forest Interpretive Center;
- Local beekeeper and educator Hilary Kearney, owner of Girl Next Door Honey;
- ThoughtSTEM, a local computer science education company;
- All Girls STEM Society, a local non-profit started by two high school students; and
- The League of Extraordinary Scientists & Engineers, which connects local schools with professionals in science fields and classroom resources.

"More than just a subject in school, science has become a tool for teaching kids how to learn," said Jeane Wong, Founder and CEO of The League of Extraordinary Scientists & Engineers. "It is clear to me that when we teach kids to think, that is when the magic happens. When they know how to think rather than just memorize facts, that is when they learn to be innovative and invent, create and build. We want to give them tools to build their future."

In addition to "Spring Into STEAM" courses, the program includes a citizen science project called Catalog of Life, an effort to collect and identify new species in our region. San Diego Public Library is working with the International Barcode of Life project, which aims to identify all life on the planet. Scientists use this information to study the diversity of species, monitor the health of our environment and the impacts of climate change.

All libraries will be offering free LifeScanner bug collection kits starting on March 2. Genetic sequencing on the kits will be done by the Centre for Biodiversity Genomics in Canada.

"This is the first time a citizen science survey of an entire city has been attempted on this scale," said Shaun Briley, Librarian and Branch Manager of the La Jolla/Riford Branch Library. "With the ocean, desert and mountain habitats, San Diego is believed to be the most biodiverse region in the contiguous states and a hotspot for endangered species. Invaluable information will be gathered for scientists while we also educate the public about our region's environment."

LifeScanner bug collection kits are available for patrons of all ages and will be returned to libraries for DNA barcoding. As part of the Catalog of Life project, a series of bio-literacy talks and workshops will be held at multiple San Diego Public Library locations.

Some of the "Spring into STEAM" programs require advance registration. For a complete course schedule and more information, visit: www.sandiego.gov/steam.

To learn more about supporting library programs and educational opportunities, contact the San Diego Public Library Foundation at 619-238-6695 and www.SupportMyLibrary.org.

About the San Diego Public Library

San Diego Public Library, which is the largest library system in the region, serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Its vision is to be “the place for opportunity, discovery, and inspiration.” Learn about events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to additional programs and resources, or search for materials in the Library’s online catalog at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

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