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Urban Families Gain Exposure to Nature Through Innovative Outdoor Program

\$25,000 Grant from Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority Provides Opportunity to Gain Skills, Comfort, and Confidence in the Outdoors

San Jose, CA – September 10, 2018 – Nearly 200 children and adults from San Jose will gain skills in how to enjoy and participate in outdoor recreation thanks to “Happy Trails.” This innovative program launched by Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose and funded by Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority aims to narrow the “nature gap” by removing barriers for inner city families.

According to CalEnviroScreen, an analysis of California communities and the environment, some of the most environmentally disadvantaged communities are within a five-mile radius of Children’s Discovery Museum. Families near the museum are likely to lack exposure to nature and its positive health benefits due to a number of factors. A \$25,000 grant from Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority for the “Happy Trails” program intends to change this.

“We’re grateful to the Open Space Authority for their long-standing partnership and support,” said Marilee Jennings, executive director of Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose. We share the same vision of removing barriers so all children can benefit from a vital relationship with the natural world. The research is clear on the many emotional, cognitive, and physical benefits of children’s connection with nature. This new program blazes a trail for families with limited means to reap the benefits of the many natural resources in Santa Clara County.”

“Happy Trails” launches this fall with a workshop series for 50-60 families who have children under 10 years old. The activities will be facilitated in small groups of 15-20 families who can sign up for the series in the language of their choice: Spanish, Vietnamese, or English.

Each workshop includes bus transportation for a museum visit to *Bill’s Backyard*, a field trip to one of Open Space Authority’s open space preserves, and parent resources. The workshops will culminate with a nature festival for all participants to celebrate what’s been learned and help families continue their explorations in the natural world.

[About Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose](#)

With over 150 interactive exhibits and programs, **Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose** is one of the largest museums of its kind in the nation. Since opening its doors in 1990, the museum has welcomed over 8.6 million visitors and has offered new exhibits each year that respond to children’s diverse educational needs. The striking 52,000 square foot purple building was designed by Mexico City-based architect Ricardo Legorreta and is a beacon of discovery. Encompassing the broad themes of community, connections and creativity, hands-on exhibits invite self-directed, open-ended explorations. For more information about the Museum, visit www.cdm.org.