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## Environmental Education Program Culminates with Nature Festival

*Grants from Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and Applied Materials  
Provide Opportunities for Urban Families to  
Gain Skills, Comfort, and Confidence in the Outdoors*

*San Jose, CA – May 16, 2019* – “Happy Trails,” the innovative program launched last fall by Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose and funded by Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority and Applied Materials culminates with a **Nature Festival** on May 18. “Happy Trails” narrows the “nature gap” by removing barriers for inner city families to experience and enjoy the outdoors through three facilitated hikes, workshops, and parent resources in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English.

Due to unexpected rain, the **Nature Festival** will be held inside the museum from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, featuring many hands-on nature activities and resources to encourage families to explore the outdoors together. *(see details below)*

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 and a \$9,750 grant from Applied Materials are helping to change this.

“We’re grateful to Open Space Authority and Applied Materials 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.

The inaugural “Happy Trails” program helped more than 200 parents and children become more comfortable and confident in the natural world. Families were bused to the museum’s outdoor environment, Bill’s Backyard, and Open Space Authority’s preserves for facilitated hikes and activities in the language of their choice. The **Nature Festival** caps off this year’s program by celebrating what’s been learned with hands-on nature activities and resources that will help families continue their outdoor explorations.

## **Nature Festival**

**May 18, 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon**

**Animal Evidence** – touch pelts and identify tracks and scat to learn about the abundance of local wildlife

**Nature Rubbings** – make nature rubbings and ask “What’s my family’s nature story?”

**Create Animals** – design and fashion an animal of your choice with provided art supplies

**Nature Journals** – create your own nature journal – where do you go to create your family’s own nature story?

**Open Space Authority Preserves** – decorate your own tree cookie and learn about the many open spaces, free parks, and preserves in Santa Clara County

**Air B & Bs** – learn how to support pollinators and make and take home a bee habitat

**Park Picks** –discover which parks are most appropriate for your family with the museum’s recommendations: ***Top Ten Parks for Your Family***

## **[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](http://www.cdm.org).