

News from the Connecticut Science Center



Science Center Teen Innovation students working in teams at the Danbury Library.

Teen Innovation Network

A quiet, serious young man is bent over a laptop, furiously coding and completely unfazed by the 16 other teenagers in the room calling to one another over heaping piles of wires and circuit boards. A young lady with purple streaks in her hair wears safety goggles and solders wires that she affixes to the bottom of a soon-to-be-autonomous skateboard. Three teens in green shirts stand in a public exhibit gallery, surrounded by children spinning a wheel that represents a white blood cell fending off an attack. Four squares of aluminum foil are taped to the floor between library shelves, connected by wires and manned by four teenagers hosting their version of the popular video game, *Dance Dance Revolution*.

This is the Connecticut Science Center's Teen Innovation Program. For six weeks, students work in teams to develop educational programs, technological applications, research projects, and hands-on exhibits to share with Connecticut Science Center visitors and Danbury Library patrons. Though supervised by CSC staff, they work independently to build, test, revise, and repeat. By the end of a single summer, they are noticeably more poised and confident. After a number of years in the program (a small group, self-styled "The Legends," is completing a fourth summer), the teens develop skills that colleges and prospective employers covet. They can code. They can budget. They can design a research study. They can troubleshoot a problem on a deadline. They can collaborate with wildly divergent personalities. They can talk to anyone.



Above: Teen Innovation students challenge the public with a music-listening experiment at the Old State House Farmers Market, in Hartford.

The Hartford-based Teen Innovation program has been running since 2012 with participants split into two groups: one focused on robotics and the other on genomics. The Danbury program launched this summer, focused on robotics. The teens increase their STEM knowledge; just as importantly, they gain practical, transferrable skills that will help them excel in 21st century workplaces and university programs. By expanding this Innovation Network, the Science Center will engage hundreds of Connecticut teens, shaping them into innovators and thought leaders of tomorrow.

The Teen Innovation Network is made possible by major support from The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation and the Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation. ■



Connecticut
Science Center®

The Connecticut Science Center inspires lifelong learning through interactive and innovative experiences that explore our changing world through science.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

**The Green Gala:
Wild Music**

Saturday, September 26 at
7:30PM

**Liquid Lounge:
OKTOBERFEST**

Friday, October 2 at 6PM



**The Code of Life: Your
Genome, Your Life**

An evening with Yu-Hui Rogers
Wednesday, October 7
at 6PM



Meet Teen Innovation Program Coordinator Jillian Beans

Jamaican-born Jillian Beans came to call Connecticut home more than 8 years ago. After earning a bachelor's degree in communications from Central Connecticut State University, she began working as a program coordinator for the Connecticut Science Center. Her position focuses on the Teen Innovation Program in Hartford.

By serving as the program coordinator to these talented young innovators, Jillian helps shape their exploration of science and technology. "I enjoy being part of the learning process. These talented students question, research, design, test, and present projects to the public in a short period of time. Their growth, both social and scientific, is tremendous." ■

2 Million Served!

On July 8, 2015, the Connecticut Science Center celebrated a major milestone, honoring the Science Center's 2-millionth customer served. Members, visitors, and campers attended a special ceremony in Science Alley, the Science Center's lobby level, that included a 6-foot shark cake.

"From presenting major exhibitions to helping parents and teachers prepare students for the innovation economy, our team is working to make Connecticut a better place to live, raise a family, and create great ideas—a place full of talent where families flourish," said Matt Fleury, Connecticut Science Center President and CEO. "The Board of Trustees and I would like to take this opportunity to thank every one of the two million people we have had the opportunity to serve since we opened six years ago, and to thank the marvelous professional team and generous donors who have made it happen." ■



Top: 2-millionth through 2-million-and-third visitors, the Luna family, with Science Center President and CEO Matt Fleury. Center-left: The 6-foot shark cake was created by Carol Murdock of Classic Cakes in West Hartford. Center-right: The Luna family cuts the cake. Bottom: Visitors shared in the celebration—and the cake!



Discovery Center Programs, presented by Travelers

With the generous support of Travelers, Connecticut Science Center STEM Educators provide approximately 18,000 K–10th grade students with engaging, hands-on science explorations each year. With diverse topics ranging from robotics to plant biology to erosion, each Discovery Center program is directly aligned to the Connecticut State Department of Education Science Framework and brings real-world scientific concepts to life.

Each immersive student experience combines a grade-specific Discovery Center Lab session, exploration in the Science Center's exhibit galleries with supplemental Exhibit Trail Guides, and further instruction and follow-up in the student's own classroom. This holistic, in-school and out-of-school approach equips participating students with a deeper understanding of the scientific topics and phenomena being explored while they are having fun with science. ■



Above: A young girl learns that hands-on science is fun AND educational.



Thank you for your support of the Connecticut Science Center.

For additional information, contact Whitney Gray, Development Director, at (860) 520-2124 or wgray@CTScienceCenter.org.

Connecticut Science Center
250 Columbus Blvd
Hartford, CT 06103