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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**KARI BYRON (*MYTHBUSTERS*), MO ROCCA (*INNOVATION NATION*),  
RAVEN THE SCIENCE MAVEN, SINGER/SONGWRITER JILL SOBULE  
HEADLINE CONNECTICUT SCIENCE CENTER 2020 VIRTUAL GALA**

**OCTOBER 3 FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUNDRAISING EVENT  
SUPPORTS MISSION, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**



**September 21, 2020** – Hartford, CT – The Connecticut Science Center’s 2020 Green Gala, taking place on October 3, is going virtual this year with an all-star lineup. **Kari Byron of *Mythbusters* and Mo Rocca of CBS’s *The Henry Ford’s Innovation Nation*** headline the event, which is moderated by **Raven The Science Maven**, a nationally acclaimed science communicator, molecular biologist, and musician. **Singer/songwriter Jill Sobule**, best known for the hit "Supermodel" from the soundtrack of the 1995 film *Clueless*, will also debut the song "Love Science".

The fundraiser will showcase Connecticut Science Center initiatives, including:

- The Science Center’s *Love Science* mission at a crucial time for science awareness, understanding, and engagement.
- The diversity, equity, inclusion, and access commitment and initiatives of the Connecticut Science Center to foster STEM opportunities across all of society.
- The announcement of the **2020 STEM Achievement Awards**, which celebrate the achievements of professionals, groups, advocates, businesses, and leaders who share the organization’s mission.
- The announcement of the **Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Leadership Award**, which recognizes a woman working in STEM who is a leader in her field and who makes a significant effort to support other women and encourage girls' interests in STEM.
- **Science demonstrations** by Connecticut Science Center STEM Educators

An online silent auction, which begins on September 28 and ends at 9:00 PM EDT on October 3 will feature virtual cooking and sports experiences, socially-distanced trips, one-of-a-kind Science Center experiences, and more.

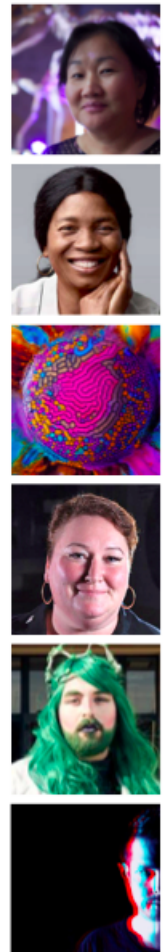
After closing for more than three months in response to the COVID crisis, the Connecticut Science Center reopened its doors in June to welcome the public back to enjoy safe, in-person science experiences. Among the first in the country and in Hartford to open, the Connecticut Science Center has led the way in bringing vibrancy, hope, and science to the community. Leveraging the experience of in-person science learning, the skillful team of Science Center educators have also adapted programs for virtual learning for students as well as teacher professional development through the *Mandell Academy for Teachers*. At the same time, the Connecticut Science Center continues to deepen its commitment to STEM career awareness; to science-based inspiration for all ages; and to ensuring diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

“While it has been a year like no other, I think we can agree that science literacy, innovation, inspiration, and equity are all more important than ever,” said Matt Fleury, President and CEO of the Connecticut Science Center. “Our annual Green Gala is an important part of our fundraising strategy to support these vital efforts. We’re thrilled to offer guests near and far an inspiring event with an exciting lineup that will showcase our critical mission.”

In addition, other event guests include:

- **Dr. Bolortsetseg Minjin, a Mongolian paleontologist** known for her work in fossil repatriation and dinosaur-themed science outreach, and the founder of the Institute for the Study of Mongolian Dinosaurs.
- **Nigerian physicist Dr. Francisca Okeke**, named a L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Awards Laureate for Africa for her significant contributions to understanding climate change and an advocate for African girls' STEM engagement.
- Swiss-born, **Connecticut-based Artist Fabian Oefner**, who creates colorful art by harnessing scientific properties in an effort to bring to attention the beauty of the natural world and how it works.
- **Oceanographer Dr. Joellen Russell**, whose research explores the role of the Southern Hemisphere ocean in the global climate and chairs the NOAA Science Advisory Board's Climate Working Group.
- Physicist **Dr. Sass, known as the world's first drag queen to popularize science**. The alter ego of Mario Peláez, Dr. Sass is on a mission to reduce discrimination of researchers against historically disenfranchised groups.
- **Internationally-acclaimed and record label owner DJ Kered**, who'll be spinning live from the Science Center for the after-party.

**Surprise event elements**, such as a live feed to an Antarctic research station and a world-famous mixologist, will be announced during the course of the gala. The main event is hosted by **WFSB's Mark Dixon** and Science Center STEM Educator Aoife Ryle. Interactive elements will allow guests to participate in the fun from home.



The VIP portion of the event begins at 6 PM EDT and tickets are \$250 per household. The main Patron event begins at 7:15 PM EDT and tickets are \$100 per household, with an after-party to

follow. All proceeds of the gala and silent auction benefit the Science Center's educational mission.

Lead sponsors this year are Harvest Investments and Travelers. For more information and for tickets: <https://ctsciencecenter.org/gala> or call (860) 520-2154.

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**About the Connecticut Science Center** The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving 1.8 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children's gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, a function room, a gift store, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also the home of the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers, offering powerful professional development for educators. More information: [CTScienceCenter.org](http://CTScienceCenter.org) or 860.SCIENCE.