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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Connecticut Science Center to Present Flower Sale & Family Gardening Activities at *MakeFest: Make it Grow***

*Annual planting of Four O'Clock Flowers in Michaela's Garden, Maker Showcase, and Plant Sale on Saturday, May 22, 2021*

**Hartford, CT, May 10, 2021**— Each spring, the Connecticut Science Center celebrates Family Gardening Day with the Petit Family Foundation around the planting of Michaela's Garden, uniting the community with inspiring programs and lots of family fun. This year's event will, once again, be a hybrid event with indoor and outdoor activities on Saturday, May 22, from 11AM -3PM, and with a virtual component for those not able to join the celebration in person. The family gardening activities are part of the Science Center's Women in Science initiative and are the centerpiece of **MakeFest: Make it Grow**.

Make it Grow is the second installment of MakeFest events hosted by the Connecticut Science Center and presented by Stanley Black & Decker. These popular, family-friendly events celebrate makers, creators, and inventors. This edition will take on a gardening theme by showcasing a range of gardeners, agricultural experts, and artisans. Science Center STEM educators will host green roof demonstrations and "take and make" activities, all with the intention of "growing" interest and inspiring visitors to dig in and make with their own hands. Future MakeFest events will follow in September 2021 and 2022.

In the Science Center's Rooftop Garden, families can join the **Petit Family Foundation** and plant the seeds of Connecticut's State Children's Flower, the Four O'Clock, in Michaela's Garden. Twelve years ago, this incredible initiative grew out of love and a mission to memorialize Michaela Rose Petit by inspiring families and youth to use gardening as a vehicle for community service. The Connecticut Science Center is proud to be one of fifteen Michaela's Garden locations across the state. Michaela's Four O'Clock seeds will be available for purchase at MakeFest: Make it Grow to help support the Petit Family Foundation's mission to foster the education of young people, especially women in the sciences.

In the spirit of encouraging young women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, we will feature **Dr. Jacquelynn Garofano**, the 2020 Petit Family Foundation Women in Science Honoree. Dr. Garofano will deliver a hands-on/minds-on experience where visitors can explore butterfly wings through materials science.

Additionally, the Connecticut Science Center has partnered with the **Connecticut Master Gardener Association (CMGA)** to organize a Plant Sale on the Science Center Plaza. Proceeds from the sale will support the green mission of the Science Center and CMGA's outreach initiatives. Gardeners will be able to explore the Plaza gardens for inspiration and then purchase beautiful, sustainable, and locally grown vegetables, pollinator plants, ground covers, grasses, and flowers at low prices. Master Gardeners and

Integrated Pest Management experts will be present to provide expert advice and support to novice gardeners looking to develop their green thumb.

The Make it Grow plant sale was the brainchild of the Science Center's Horticulturist and Butterfly Encounter Manager, Kimberly Kelly. Mrs. Kelly is also a member of the Connecticut Master Gardeners Association's Board of Directors and has built a successful partnership between the two organizations, connecting the green missions of both organizations through volunteer opportunities and public education. "This inaugural event gives us a chance to showcase our beautiful plaza and rooftop gardens and to inspire the community to explore the joys, benefits, and science of gardening," said Mrs. Kelly. "Whether you plant seeds in Michaela's Garden or interact with one of our Master Gardeners at our plant sale, the Make it Grow event will foster interest in science and STEM Careers and introduce the community to sustainability in a fun and engaging environment."

More Event Highlights and Activities at the Science Center:

- The **Keney Park Sustainability Project** (Windsor, CT) provides hands-on training and educational outreach to help families become more self-sustainable and environmentally conscious, all while preserving Hartford's historic Keney Park. At MakeFest: Make it Grow, they will guide visitors through nutrient-rich soil-making and help them plant microgreens and herbs to bring home.
- **Connecticut Dairy** (Hartford, CT) celebrates all things dairy--farming, food, nutrition, and wellness--to champion dairy farm families and the nutritious foods they produce through outreach and research. Families can visit the New England Dairy Mobile Dairy Bar for delicious samples, photo booth fun, and much more.
- **Owl Ridge Fibers** (Bristol, CT) raises Leicester Longwool sheep, hand processes their fleeces, and uses natural plant-based dyes sourced on their farm to create wool products. Their team will conduct wool-spinning demonstrations and sell sustainably produced products.
- Additional presenters include Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Specialists **Sean Bissailon and Josh Gorham** (Southwick, MA), the **Hartford Audubon Society** (West Hartford, CT), and **Naturally** (Trumbull, CT).

**MakeFest: Make it Grow** at the Connecticut Science Center is a great way to come together to enjoy a fun, safe day at a great price. For those who wish to join the festivities from home, the Science Center will broadcast a Maker Show and Tell on Facebook LIVE from 12PM to 1PM.

All guests visiting in-person must follow the Science Center's Safety at Play guidelines, which can be found at [CTScienceCenter.org](https://www.ctsciencecenter.org).

Timed tickets include all-day access to the Connecticut Science Center's exhibits, including its traveling exhibit, *Dinosaurs Around the World*, as well as MakeFest activities. Parking is available at regular rates. Mini Munch Sliders Food Truck will be available outside for food purchases, including vegan options. Visitors must purchase timed tickets online in advance of their visit. Children under two years of age are admitted free. A limited number of tickets are available at [CTScienceCenter.org](https://www.ctsciencecenter.org).

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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 3.5 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.