

# CURIODYSSEY news FOR THE CURIOUS



Children experimenting with ice during our Ice Investigators activity, photo by Sanders Fabares

## Up close with our educators

CuriOdyssey's science educators teach so many incredible topics. From up-close animal encounters to experiences investigating ice, our educators share some of their favorite activities.

### OUR EDUCATORS' FAVORITE SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

#### ANIMALS

"My favorite activity to lead is Animal Encounters. There aren't many places where kids can get such an up close look at wildlife, so it is always fun to hear them make observations about the animals and give them the chance to touch many of the creatures."

-Caitlin O'Hara, Educator

#### LIGHT

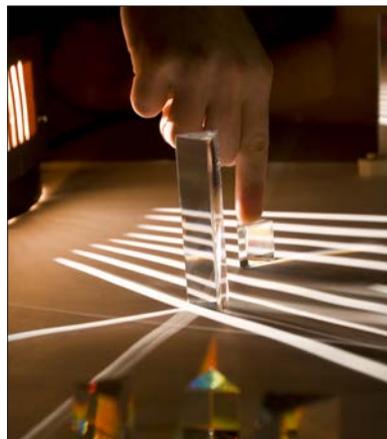
"My favorite activity is Light Island. In this activity, a light fixture is put in the middle of the table with only a few slits or filtered holes where the light can escape. Students then use mirrors and prisms to bend, reflect, and split the light. I love it because light is central to everything we see around us, and colors are only the light that reflects off of a surface. On an atomic scale, every object you see is more than 99% empty space, and what you are seeing isn't the "thing" itself, but light reflecting off of its mostly-empty surface."

-Bryan Holmes, Educator

#### TOOLS

"I don't have just one favorite activity, but in general [I enjoy] teaching kids how to use tools such as hammers, saws, and drills. This is important because it is a skill that they will be able to use their whole life. When they learn how to use tools safely as a child, they are less likely to be injured by tools as adults."

-Carl Oosterman, Director of Education



Using a prism to bend light in the Light Island activity

#### ICE

"I really enjoy Ice Investigators. Students get giant ice balls that they melt with salt, metal, and water. This activity is my favorite because of the ownership each student takes with their individual experiments. I rarely hear, "What do I do now?" because they all have so many ideas to try. It just so happens that this leads them to awesome discoveries about states of matter!"

-Eliza Lubetkin, Educator

#### FLIGHT

"I love paper helicopters. Other than making three cuts and four folds on a piece of paper, the most important instruction of the activity is to experiment and try new things. It is elegant in its simplicity, accessible to all age groups, and it is something anyone can continue at home. There are so many ways to make simple or complicated alterations to the paper and notice what changes occur. Best of all, the results are observable immediately."

-Catherine Brett, Educator

# CuriOdyssey's Raccoon Trio



Photo from the exhibition, "Harmonious Balance" by Sanders Fabares

Until June 22, 2014, CuriOdyssey's North Gallery will feature "Harmonious Balance," a photography exhibition by Sanders Fabares. The show highlights patterns and symmetry in nature, including scales, feathers, shells, petals, bark, eyes and spots.

All photos were taken within a five-minute walk of CuriOdyssey, either inside Coyote Point Park or at CuriOdyssey. The exhibition was created with the hope that it would inspire visitors to take a walk outside and enjoy the symmetry in nature!

The exhibition be on display in the North Gallery until June 22, 2014.



## MEMBER APPRECIATION MONTH: JULY 2014

Members enjoy additional, exclusive benefits all July long!

- Early hours for Members-only on Saturdays, 9am-10am in July

Each week receive the following benefits:

- July 1-5 : Giveaways each day
- July 6-12: Bring a Friend Free
- July 13-19: Double Discount in the CuriOdyssey Shop
- July 20-26: Bring a Friend Free
- July 27-31: Giveaways each day



CuriOdyssey's latest additions: Raccoons Pebbles and Tilly join Merlin in a brand-new exhibit space. Photo by Jen Gale.

## Meet Pebbles, Tilly, and Merlin

Earlier this year, raccoons Pebbles and Tilly were released into a brand-new exhibit space at CuriOdyssey. Pebbles and Tilly are sharing this space with Merlin, CuriOdyssey's 13-year-old (and somewhat crotchety) resident raccoon. But Merlin gets a pass for being slightly grumpy - he's currently the oldest living raccoon in captivity. And we're so glad to have him!



Tilly the raccoon inside her exhibit

CuriOdyssey's animal keepers introduced the trio of raccoons through smells (like blankets and other objects that are scented like one another) and sight (seeing one another from afar) before placing them together in the same space. The introduction process was a slow and careful one in order to ensure animal safety. Luckily, all three are getting along very happily in their new home.

## CuriOdyssey's Official Socialization Dog

Many days of the week inside the CuriOdyssey animal keeper office, one might spy a friendly, black-furred dog napping under a desk or trotting around, looking for a willing hand to pet her soft back. This dog's name is "Doobie" and belongs to Lead Animal Keeper Eunice.



In addition to enjoying the company of humans, Doobie also enjoys meeting other animals. A few times a week, Doobie visits CuriOdyssey to play an important role in the Wildlife Department; she acts as a socialization companion for our brand-new animals.

When a new animal arrives at CuriOdyssey, there's often a long training process that involves helping them acclimate to their new environment. More often than not, Doobie is an integral part of the introduction process. While our animal keepers train and work with new animal arrivals, they often use Doobie to provide enrichment and stimulation for the animals.

Most recently, Doobie has played a role in helping socialize our ferrets, fox, and raccoons. Her presence has both calmed skittish animals and also provided enrichment for animals (our very curious ferrets always seem particularly interested in her!).

So if you see a little black dog in a green vest the next time you visit, please say, "Hello!" Doobie is another important member of the CuriOdyssey team. She's also the only staff member who will work just for dog biscuits!



PG&E's Frank Salguero with Wildlife Keeper Rachael Rufino

A heartfelt "Thank you!" to our Earth Day community sponsors Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Walmart.com for helping to underwrite our annual celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, April 19. Community Liaison Frank Salguero with Government Relations Representative Scott Hart presented PG&E's sponsorship check to CuriOdyssey Wildlife staff member Rachael Rufino, and a group of 16 PG&E staff members and their families stayed to celebrate Earth Day at CuriOdyssey.

More than 550 visitors enjoyed eco-friendly activities and an incredible cadre of 200 more volunteers attended our Coyote Point Park beach and park clean-up event – the highest attendance ever! This year our visitors examined soil in Coyote Point Park, investigated water conservation, and learned to make crafts from recycled materials with our partners from the Museum of Craft & Design. Guests also got up close with our raptors, touched other "Animal Ambassadors," and enjoyed otter and bobcat feedings.

We are grateful for the generous response from our community in support of Earth Day. Thank you for helping us teach children and their families to care for our world. We're all in this together!

## Former pets find a home



Oliver the skunk, taken by Sanders Fabares

A common question CuriOdyssey's Animal Keepers get asked is, "Can I have a (insert one of our education or exhibit animals here) as a pet?" While an exotic animal may seem like a fun companion, the truth is that they are unpredictable, high-maintenance, and often illegal. Many of CuriOdyssey's animals are actually surrendered pets because their owners realized they could not care for them or that it is a crime to own them. This was the case with our striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), desert tortoises (*Gopherus agassizii/berlandieri*), and European ferrets (*Mustela putorius furo*).

Our striped skunk "Oliver" came to us in 2012 from Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release. He was found inside of a gym bag and did not appear fearful of people, which indicated that Oliver was likely a former pet. Because Oliver does not have a healthy fear of humans, he was not released into the wild. If he were to be released, Oliver would likely approach people for food and water. This would not be safe since, unlike a domestic dog or cat that has been bred based on temperament, he is a wild animal.

Oliver is now one of our beloved education animals. His scent glands were removed and he is now used for onsite and offsite education programs. When Oliver is not inspiring the public to be mindful of wildlife, he enjoys scampering in our backfield area, eating meal worms and being trained for various behaviors.



Antiguo the tortoise, taken by Justin Miel

CuriOdyssey also has two desert tortoises: "Spork" and "Antiguo." Like Oliver, both of these tortoises were former pets. Today, it is illegal to have desert tortoises as pets unless they were acquired before August 4, 1989 or were adopted through a US Fish and Wildlife Service-approved adoption program. Our exhibit tortoise, Antiguo, was found walking down Santa Cruz Street and was taken to SPCA. He came to CuriOdyssey in 1999. Our education tortoise, Spork, was surrendered to the Silicon Valley Turtle and Tortoise Rescue and came to CuriOdyssey in 2009. Tortoises are a high-maintenance pets due to their lighting and heating requirements and can live over 80 years in captivity - talk about a long commitment!



Ferrets, taken by Sanders Fabares

Fabio the ferret arrived to CuriOdyssey overweight because as a pet, he was not fed the proper diet. Today, he is a much healthier weight as a result of better nutrition. All of our ferrets live together, creating a group of ferrets known as a "business." They are a very popular education animal here, best known for their appearances in our Wildlife Shows. Their favorite food is cooked shrimp and they love running through small tunnels!

- Rachael Rufino, animal keeper

# Experiment with Science at Home!

## ACTIVITY: LAUGHING CUP



Have you ever heard of a cup that laughs? Hear chuckles, guffaws, and great belly laughs when you create a laughing cup. This activity will show you how it can happen - and why!

Grade level: pre-school and older, with help from a parent for the scissors portion

### You'll need:

- Paper cup
- Paper clip
- String
- Scissors
- A small amount of water in a bowl



### What to do:

1. Tie about 2 feet of string to a paper clip (make sure to tie a tight knot!).
2. Poke a small hole in the bottom of the cup with the tip of a pencil.
3. Thread the string through the hole in the bottom of the cup.

- Before you use water to play with your laughing cup, see what happens without water.
- First, hold the string taut and pull your fingers along the string. What sound do you hear? Do you hear anything at all?
- Now, try out your laughing cup with the water.
- Dip the string all the way into the bowl of water (make sure to saturate the string).
- Holding the string taut, pull your fingers along the string a little at a time to make laughing noises.



### What's happening here?

Your fingers create a vibration on the string, which is amplified through the cup to create the sounds. You can play with different-sized cups to create a variety of sounds. Next, try using a coffee or soup can to see what kinds of sounds you can make. Have fun and try it out!

## ACTIVITY: VERMICULTURE (COMPOSTING WITH WORMS)

This type of composting is useful if you will just be composting food waste and don't plan to compost yard waste.

### You'll need:

- A compost container (almost any size will do) with a lid made of plastic or untreated wood
- soil (enough for at least 4 inches in your compost container)
- 1/2 cup of kitchen scraps (fruits, vegetables, coffee grounds, tea bags and eggshells)
- A handful of fine sand (to aid in worm digestion)
- A handful of crushed eggshell (for calcium and increased reproduction)
- Two handfuls shredded, unbleached paper towels
- 1 pound of redworms
- water

### What to do:

1. Make a few dime-sized holes in the lid and on the bottom of your bin.
2. Place enough soil to form a starting bed at least four inches deep.
3. Add a handful of fine sand, a handful of crushed eggshell, 1/2 cup of diced kitchen scraps (no meat, dairy, bones, flour, sugar, salt, vinegar, juice, preservatives, or oil) and two handfuls of shredded unbleached paper towels or newspaper.
4. Spread the worms over the bedding and put the lid on. Let the worms rest for one week to get used to their new environment.
5. Then, feed every other day, beginning with 1/2 cup of kitchen scraps.

One pound of worms will consume 1/2 pound of kitchen scraps per day. Increase feedings as worms multiply. If the worms don't consume all of the scraps, decrease the amount of food. Make sure the top layer of the bedding is always damp. You do not need to stir the compost. Your redworm castings (nutrient-rich excretions) should be ready to harvest in 2-3 months. Just scrape the top few inches of soil with worms to one side and remove the castings in the bottom of the bin to transplant to your garden.

# Innovators Circle Contributors

The Board of Trustees and staff of CuriOdyssey wish to express our sincere appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their generous support between January 1, 2014 and April 31, 2014.

*Every effort has been made to be accurate. If your name is not present or you are not recognized properly, please contact Tavi Haberman, Development Associate at 650.340.7573.*

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# Tribute Gifts

Thank you to the following donors for tribute gifts between January 1, 2014 and April 31, 2014.

## **In honor of:**

*Connie Sevier:* William and Barbara Loveless *Don Shavey:* Eileen Arbues and Terry Robison *Ebony Lee :* Eileen Arbues and Terry Robison *Carla O'Connor:* Eileen Arbues and Terry Robison

## **In memory of:**

*Esther Hsu:* Linda and Sterling Lanier

# "All Things Being Equal" Math Fest

More than 900 people spent a joyful Sunday March 23 at CuriOdyssey's first-ever math festival – "All Things Being Equal" – staged at the spring equinox. The Friday evening before, more than 130 Innovators Circle members and friends came to a delightful preview event.

Math is the language of science. And as with all abstractions, understanding it must begin with concrete experience. Our "All Things Being Equal" festival provided a rare opportunity for children to spend an entire visit having lots of fun with the basic principles on which mathematics is built. Children and their families eagerly investigated bell curves with our "Probability Machine," drew beautiful roulette curves at our spirograph station, explored geometry with origami animals, colored forms on a light table, and experimented with giant tangrams.



We look forward to giving kids more and ongoing opportunities for physically engaging explorations in the language of mathematics. Thank you to all who attended for helping to make our first "All Things Being Equal" a great success, and thanks to all of our donors for helping us make learning a fun, engaging experience for all of our visitors year-round. We hope to see you at next year's "All Things Being Equal" event!

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This is a publication  
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1651 Coyote Point Dr.  
San Mateo, CA 94401  
Tel: 650-342-7755

## Events (June - August)

### MEMBER APPRECIATION MONTH

July 2014

This month is our way of saying "thanks" to our wonderful members. Enjoy exclusive benefits all month long!

July 1-5 : Giveaways each day

July 6-12: Bring a Friend Free

July 13-19: Double Discount in the CuriOdyssey Shop

July 20-26: Bring a Friend Free

July 27-31: Giveaways each day

### SAVE THE DATE

*Reptile Day*

July 26, 2014

Join us for a celebration of reptiles! Meet our warm weather-loving reptiles up-close, and see what slithers, slides, and crawls!

CuriOdyssey Gala

CuriOdyssey's signature fundraising event is September 20, 2014!

For more information or to become a sponsor, please contact Tavi Haberman at 650-340-7573

### SCHOOL AND GROUP PROGRAMS

Begin October 2014

Registration begins August 18

Looking for an exciting activity for your classroom or group? Our educational programs spark passion for science and allow children the opportunity to get up close with the natural world. Interactive exhibits, amazing live animals, and high-quality educational programs—all on a personal scale—provide children with an unforgettable experience.

For more information, visit [www.CuriOdyssey.org/school-groups](http://www.CuriOdyssey.org/school-groups).

### ON-GOING PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Animals In Action  
*Tues-Sat, 11:00am*

Otter Feeding  
*Tues-Sun, 12:00 noon*

Bobcat Feeding  
*Tues-Sun, 1:00pm*

Animal Connections  
Wildlife Show  
*Sat-Sun, 1:30pm and 2:30pm*