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Dear Friends,

We are so grateful for your partnership with us as CuriOdyssey enters its 70th year serving the Bay Area with immersive and impactful hands-on STEM education.

As an organization, our talented and dedicated teams helped us add to a sterling list of accomplishments in 2023, including:

- Our new Bay Gallery & Labs building, part of our campus rebuild project, opened in June, featuring the new ViewPoint Exhibit, showcasing phenomena in the world around us.
- Last summer, we removed both the $1 ticket fee and the $35 annual membership fee for our Museums For All programs, which increases access for all Bay Area children and families, regardless of financial means. Eligible families can now visit CuriOdyssey with zero out-of-pocket costs. In addition, we expanded the qualifying criteria for the related Membership For All program, which grants qualifying families free admission for twelve months.
- Our popular special exhibition, IlluminOdyssey, which began its seventh season in November, attracted more than 31,000 visitors.
- Our Sensory Sunday events, held four times a year and designed for guests of all ages who are neurodivergent, attracted 530 attendees. This event was made possible with the support of our partners: Chance to Excel Foundation, AbilityPath, Autism Society San Francisco Bay Area, Magical Bridge Foundation, and the PARCA Auxiliary.
- The Winter 2023 storms dealt a serious blow to our campus with fallen trees, a power outage, flooding, and damage to our buildings and otter enclosure. We were closed from March to June, but with support from San Mateo County, private foundations, and individual donations, we were able to repair the damage and reopen once again to serve our community.
- Response to our matching gift challenge helped us raise over $325,000.

In 2023, despite the storm closures, we welcomed over 107,000 visitors and are well on our way to serving pre-pandemic numbers.

On behalf of the CuriOdyssey staff, board, volunteers, and animals, thank you for your ongoing support, which enabled us to continue our important work this past year, providing accessible, cutting-edge early STEM education to young people in the Bay Area.

With gratitude,

Aragon Burlingham
Executive Director
OUR MISSION

Inspire love for science and curiosity about the world to create a brighter future.

OUR VALUES

Integrity: We do what’s right.
- We consider safety in everything we do.
- We are accountable, transparent, and respectful.
- We are committed to environmental sustainability, conservation, and the welfare of the animals in our care.

Creativity: We imagine a better way.
- We are innovative, curious, and creative.
- We value fun and imagination.
- We create a better future.

Community: We are inclusive.
- We value teamwork, transparency, and collaboration.
- We encourage self-direction and empowerment.
- We design for diversity, equity, and inclusion by centering marginalized voices.
OUR PILLARS

Education

We create programs that immerse children in hands-on, interactive, exploration-based experiences with science and nature, igniting their curiosity and creating the next generation of critical thinkers. We give children opportunities to be active participants in their own learning. Educational opportunities are presented in a variety of formats, including: camps, workshops, school field trips, homeschool programs, and STEMCorps. The four pillars of our STEMCorps approach are: STEM mentors, educator professional development, youth development, and community partnerships.

Exhibits

CuriOdyssey’s Exhibits Department creates original, innovative hands-on exhibits that encourage visitors of all ages to touch, observe, listen, wonder, and experiment with simple scientific phenomena. With in-house design and rigorous on-site prototyping, we ensure that visitor interactions with our exhibits are rich with layers of phenomena that demonstrate various scientific principles, real without simulation and allowing interaction with actual physical forces, and right-now with visitors experiencing immediate outcomes through their interactions. These are all crucial elements for engaging early learning experiences.

Wildlife

Our Wildlife Program is the centerpiece of nature education within our organization. The care, conservation, protection, and education it provides are vital to our role as a science and wildlife center and as a champion for the Bay Area environment. CuriOdyssey is accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, which is a high honor as less than 10% of the 28,000 zoos and aquariums in the US receive this accreditation. Many of our animals are rescued and would be unable to live in the wild due to imprinting on humans or injury.

Accessibility

We firmly believe that justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion are fundamental rights for all and that continuous work and ongoing support are required to create a safe space so that staff, volunteers, and patrons will thrive. We offer several free and reduced-cost programs for youth from under-resourced communities to ensure equitable opportunities to experience our transformative programs. Our work in accessibility also includes our Magical Bridge-designed playground for all abilities as well as Sensory Sundays designed for guests who are neurodivergent or have sensory sensitivities.
THE YEAR IN REVIEW
107,218
visitors walked through CuriOdyssey’s doors this year despite
14
weeks of closure due to extreme weather and storm-related damage

50,000+
children engaged with CuriOdyssey at our campus or in the community
9 First Friday Nights

2,212 visitors enjoyed live music, food vendors, educational and exhibit offerings, and animal encounters at this monthly event.
EXCITING PROGRAMS

STEAM is interdisciplinary and interwoven into our everyday lives

6,367 children, teachers, and caregivers served through school and public programs
6 Camp CuriOdyssey programs that served a record 736 campers
ACCESS FOR ALL
Science education is a right, not a privilege

4,700 visitors received free admission through Museums for All

505 qualified families signed up for a free membership

1,300 visitors received free admission through other discount programs
Sensory Sundays launched in July 2023

530 visitors who are neurodivergent or have sensory access needs enjoyed two free afternoons of museum and zoo exploration

50 volunteers supported visitors at this event
11% of Camp CuriOdyssey campers had need and accommodation requests on their registration forms.

300+ hours of in-camp support were provided to these campers.

88% of feedback from caregivers highlighted the positive experience of their child, emphasizing feelings of safety, understanding, and support at camp.
1,816 individuals received a scholarship for a school program or youth and family program

333% increase in scholarship participants from FY22

$64K of these scholarships were subsidized by contributed revenue
Anonymous Testimonials from Camp Scholarship Families

“I’m so grateful and honored that you have provided these unique opportunities for my daughters that we would not have been able to provide. They are both lovers of nature and all life, from the smallest bug, to the biggest sea creatures. They go from climbing trees and collecting special plant and stone tokens every day on their walks to/from school. It is so special and lucky that they get to have that natural interest cultivated further, especially through CuriOdyssey, a place they love.”

“My daughter had an amazing time at the camp. Something that she would not have been able to experience without the scholarship program. She is usually shy and even though she had not one friend in sight, she was still very excited to attend camp each day and hated to leave at the end of the day. It caused us to visit more and when I discovered the Membership for All program, I did not hesitate to apply.”

“Thank you for providing this opportunity to the local youth. I have wanted to send my girls to the camp for years, but it was not within our budget.”
50 students served in the STEMCorps Mentor Program

12 high school youth served in the pilot Youth Leadership Development Program

223 students served through our Community Partnerships
DEDICATED VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers are critical to our success

250 volunteers

8,810 hours of service

4.6 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)
15,000+
personalized interactions for families and groups

$303,000
estimated value in FTE work

$34.39
estimated value per hour
INSPIRING EXHIBITS
Innovative, hands-on exhibitions that you won’t see anywhere else

23,751
visitors explored IlluminOdyssey
(November 4, 2022-January 9, 2023)

6
years of IlluminOdyssey, our beloved winter light science experience

24%
increase in IlluminOdyssey visitors over the previous year
Added self-illuminated graphic content to center the science behind **IlluminOdyssey**.

15 new exhibits as part of **ViewPoint**, the first permanent, and largest, exhibition built in-house in over six years.

**Fall into Science**, a new seasonal exhibition, was launched featuring new exhibits such as Pepper's Ghost, Haunted Paintings, and the return of autumn decor including flower arrangements, carved jack-o-lanterns on pikes, singing pumpkins, and more!
63 animals

38 species

in CuriOdyssey’s Association of Zoos & Aquariums-accredited care
CONSERVATION
To inspire hope to heal the planet through collaborative learning, action, and inclusion

12 grants awarded as a part of our expanded conservation grants program

25 community members attended our Bioblitz event, co-hosted with San Mateo Parks as a part of the Bay Area Nature Challenge

60+ people in attendance when CurioDyssey co-presented at the AZA conference on SAFE strategies for western pond turtles

CurioDyssey is a participating partner and member of the Veterinary Working Group for the Wildlife Trafficking Alliance
Revitalized the pollinator garden and accompanying educational signs and created new painted lady butterfly diorama with planned butterfly release days.

Began strategic mapping design for conservation trail on CuriOdyssey grounds that will help connect exhibits to the zoo. The intent is to create an "integrative science story path" as visitors walk around the facility.
CURIODYSSEY CAMPUS CAMPAIGN
A world-class center for early science learning in San Mateo County

Bay Gallery & Labs opened
June 2023

First new building added to campus in 30 years

Included upgraded landscaping with pathlighting and outdoor gathering spaces for teaching and events
1,023 visitors experienced the Bay Gallery & Labs on opening day.
In total we spent $6,305,407, of which $4,840,308 (77%) was for Program Expenses and $1,483,087 (23%) was for Supporting Expenses. Prior to the pandemic, nearly 200,000 (unaudited) children and families visited the Organization each year to observe the native California animals and experiment with scientific phenomena. The long-term effects of the pandemic, combined with an emergency 11-week closure during the year, led to a 45% decrease (unaudited) in visitation from pre-pandemic levels over the period October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023.
Did you know that our lesser hedgehog tenrec's closest relatives are otter shrews and golden moles? They are not related to hedgehogs at all. Tenrecs and hedgehogs are a great example of convergent evolution, which is when animals evolve similar solutions to similar problems. Despite not being closely related, they both likely evolved their similar spiny armor in response to needing a way to protect themselves from predators.
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS WHO CONTRIBUTED BETWEEN 10/1/2022–9/30/2023!

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CurioOdssey’s Redwood Society recognizes those who have chosen to support CurioOdssey through planned giving.

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