



April 1, 2024

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30th Anniversary of BioSITE Program Prepares Students for Climate Changes

Students Learn Watershed Ecology and Leadership and Mentoring Skills on Local Creeks and Rivers

San Jose, CA – April 1, 2024 –Thousands of students have learned science in nearby creeks and rivers over the last 30 years through [BioSITE](#), the award-winning program created by Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. Every year high school and 4th and 5th grade students roll up their sleeves and pant legs to collect data about the local watershed and the plants and animals in this yearlong field research course. The program focuses on the human impact on local watersheds and the actions people can take to protect waterways and the environment.

Since its launch in the 1993-94 school year, nearly 26,000 students from 40 schools, mainly from the San Jose Unified School District, have learned the rigors of inquiry-based science through authentic field research. Elementary students work in teams throughout the year studying local creeks and waterways with trained high school student mentors.

“Helping young people understand how important water is in a healthy ecosystem has never been more important in drought-prone California,” said Marilee Jennings, executive director of Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose. “I'm proud that the museum is helping develop the next generation of environmental stewards to help combat climate change.”

The fourth graders benefit from individualized attention and hands-on opportunities in small groups while high school students build valuable leadership, mentorship, and science skills. In the field, students learn how to mitigate climate change and promote healthy waterways by conducting water quality tests and learning about local plants and animals. Through scientific inquiry, all the participants can explore the impact their choices have on the environment and how relevant science is in their everyday lives.

Students collect data on water flow, pH, dissolved solids, river height, turbidity, temperature, and how much oxygen is in the water throughout the year. They also engage in field-based science activities about the local flora and fauna, animals, and general health of the waterways.

“In a time where peoples' connection with the environment and nature is becoming scarce, a program like BioSITE is so very important to help build that connection in our young students,

said Rob Zacheo, science teacher at Pioneer High School. “We hope that all students involved then pay it forward and become environmentally conscious stewards of rivers and local ecosystems and look to make a difference themselves.”

Oracle Corporation and PWC have partially funded the BioSITE program for the past 14 years.

[About Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose](#)

Kids lead the way at Children’s Discovery Museum of San Jose, exploring and discovering through open-ended, play-based learning. Over 150 hands-on exhibits and programs in the sciences, humanities, arts, nature, and health spark curiosity and ignite family fun where children build life skills in creative and critical thinking, problem-solving, and confidence. The nonprofit celebrates people and diverse cultures, creates authentic connections, and builds global understanding. Welcoming more than 10 million visitors since 1990, the award-winning museum inspires creativity, curiosity, and lifelong learning inside the stunning 50,000-square-foot purple building designed by the late world-renowned Mexico City architect Ricardo Legoretta, and outside in the half-acre nature space.

For more information about the museum, visit www.cdm.org.

