

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



**The Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum
Announces Plans for 2023 to Invest in Next Generation of Leaders in Science and
Conservation with Immersive Exhibits**

*Nature Museum's new member-only hours and updated admissions prices starting early
February to drive growth and sustain community programs*

CHICAGO (Jan. 25, 2023) — The Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum embarks on bright future in 2023 and continues its pledge to educate the community about science and nature. This year, the Nature Museum adds new exhibits focused on reaching audiences of all ages and is committed to its education and conservation programs which on average welcome 50,000 students on field trips each year at no cost to Chicago students and has trained over 900 Chicagoans on sustainability focused projects through its Chicago Conservations Corps (C3) program in every neighborhood.

To support this growth and sustain the mission of the Nature Museum, there will be an increase in admission prices starting Feb. 1. This is the first admission increase in 15 years and is necessary to address the cost of inflation over the same period and maintain and enhance services and offerings. Generous sponsorships, grants and other contributed support make up 60% of the Nature Museum's revenue but admissions also are a key part of supporting the many education and community outreach programs the Nature Museum hosts. For example, the projected additional revenue from this increase covers the costs to reach 37,500 students in hands-on field trip workshops taught by full-time museum educators. Admission will continue to be free for Illinois residents every Thursday.

"The Nature Museum is a 166-year-old institution firmly rooted in its commitment to connecting the community to nature and science. We are excited about the growth and evolution at the Nature Museum to further diversify our audience and ability to deliver dynamic and engaging exhibits and education and conservation programs which impact every neighborhood in Chicago," said Nature Museum President and CEO Erin Amico. "This change in admission was not a decision that was made lightly, but with intention, so we can continue this important work for the next century and beyond."

With her as a new leader at the helm, Amico has unveiled plans to invest in the next generation of STEM leaders which includes an emphasis on technology in immersive exhibits designed for ages 12 and older to meet children where they are and engage with how they learn best using a digital-first approach. The first of which, an immersive exhibit featuring local artist Mike MacDonald, is expected to open in April and features digital elements that participants can interact with using smart phones or other compatible devices.

(more)

Other new developments at the Nature Museum include the long-awaited Sustainability Center which will open in the fall. At the heart of this state-of-the-art exhibit is a community hub and resource center for guests of all ages to learn about living in balance with the environment. The Sustainability Center will feature rotating exhibits, digital content and spotlights on individuals who are making a difference in more sustainable living. The Nature Museum also recently celebrated the opening of *Hawver and Lacy Families Nature's PlaySpace* in late 2022 which is the museum's largest investment in two decades and creates a space for the museum's youngest visitors to learn about the Great Lakes region through child-led play.

Other changes coming to the museum in 2023 include new expanded hours for members only allowing them early entry on Sundays and Tuesdays beginning at 9 a.m. starting Feb. 5. The Nature Museum will continue to be open to the public daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The updated admissions go into effect Feb. 1 and range from \$8 to \$15 for Illinois residents based on visitor age and discounts. Prices range \$10 to \$17 for non-residents. Children under the age of three are always free. Every Thursday, admission to the Nature Museum is free for Illinois residents. Visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance online, but ticketing is also available on-site. More information is available at www.NatureMuseum.org.

About the Chicago Academy of Science / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum

For over 166 years, the Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum ("Nature Museum") has been connecting Chicagoans to nature and science. As a leader in the field of scientific research, education and community programming, Nature Museum's mission is to create a positive relationship between people and nature through collaboration, education, research and collections, exhibitions and public forums to grow the region's urban connection to the world of nature and science. Nature Museum believes that nature and science should and can be accessible to everyone and seeks to be a spark that ignites and fosters a sense of wonder for nature, an understanding of science and protection of the natural world.

Founded in 1857, the Chicago Academy of Sciences is Chicago's oldest museum and one of America's oldest scientific institutions. Created by members seeking to understand the natural world through methodical exploration and study, the Chicago Academy of Sciences became the first private scientific museum founded in the city of Chicago. When the Academy opened its doors to the public in 1869, the institution's focus expanded to that of a community museum with the goal of welcoming and engaging Chicago residents and visitors. The scientific collections that have been curated and preserved through the Chicago Academy of Sciences have been used to help define human understanding of nature, ecology and the diversity of life in the United States. They are key resources in allowing the scientific community to interpret our present place in history as well as anticipate future conditions. For more information, visit naturemuseum.org.

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