



From the President

Koret's youth development program is a direct complement to our K-12 Education Initiative. By broadening our focus to include a range of skills and competencies important to achievement beyond the classroom, we hope to offer Bay Area youth the best opportunity for self-sufficiency and success in life.

All of the youth docent programs supported by Koret provide challenging and supportive learning experiences during non-school hours for low-income Bay Area middle school and high school youth. More specifically, these programs have been selected for their rigor in evaluation and their fiscal responsibility, as well as for achieving tangible youth development goals. Recent longitudinal studies conducted by outside evaluators for two such programs — the California Academy of Sciences and the Exploratorium — document the long-term positive impact of these docent programs on young people's lives.

Helping the youth in our community realize their full potential is fundamental to Koret's mission. Grants awarded through our youth development program area support this enduring goal.

Tad Taube, President
Koret Foundation

Koret Funding Focus: Youth Development

Youth Docent Programs Help Young People Achieve Their Potential

by Gale Mondry

Underscoring its core value of helping individuals realize their full potential, Koret has a long history of funding youth development programs. One funding area, which we highlight in this issue, is youth docent programs at science and wildlife museums.

Since its very beginnings in 1979, Koret has been committed to improving the lives of young people from low-income backgrounds through grants to community-based organizations with a track record of delivering high-quality, effective services.

In this effort, we strive to help make available to low-income youth the supports and opportunities that are more readily available to young people in middle- and upper-class communities.

The youth docent programs highlighted here offer young people opportunities to engage in work-based and service-learning activities at various Bay Area science and technology museums. Every year hundreds of young people who participate in these programs improve their self-confidence, develop important interpersonal relationships, enhance their knowledge of science and math, and think differently about their own future endeavors.

The youth docent programs that Koret supports utilize "best practices," have achieved desired outcomes, regularly evaluate their performance, are financially sustainable, and have the potential for expansion and/or replication.

Koret's activities in the youth development field complement its goals in its K-12 education funding area. At the same time, the youth development program focus is broader than school success, encompassing the development of a range of skills and competencies important for success in life.



Program Officer Gale Mondry manages Koret's youth development portfolio. Gale began her career at Stanford University in the general counsel's office. She then became

Vice President for Legal Services at California Pacific Medical Center, a position she held for 11 years. Gale's extensive experience with nonprofit organizations includes service as board chair of the award-winning Gateway High School, a charter school that she helped to found in 1998; director of major gifts for Huckleberry Youth Programs; and board president and capital campaign co-chair for the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. She is a graduate of Brown University and Harvard Law School.

CATALYST

Explainers

The Exploratorium, San Francisco

www.exploratorium.edu



Exploratorium photo by Amy Snyder

Explainers do demonstrations such as cow's eye dissections.

At the Exploratorium in San Francisco, high school Explainers have brought the magic of science and a culture of learning to visitors since the museum's opening in 1969. As an educational organization, the Exploratorium has been a pioneer and leader in interactive science centers; the Explainers, supported by the Koret Foundation, bring youthful enthusiasm and life to this mission.

Learning and teaching about science, art, and human perception, Explainers serve as the floor staff of the Exploratorium, serving visitors by answering questions about exhibits and programs. In addition, Explainers reap the benefits of a well-structured youth development program. Each semester — a four-month period beginning in the summer, fall, or spring — a new cohort of Explainers is hired, in addition to a few who return from the previous semester, for a total of 100 students per year.

Each group represents a variety of complementary skills in terms of expertise in science, ability to deal with the public, and teaching experience. Explainers learn from each other and from museum staff, developing their interests and skills while gaining

self-confidence and overall personal growth. Utilizing young people as its frontline staff with visitors, the Exploratorium effectively reinforces the message that science is accessible.

Four Exploratorium staff members are responsible for the explainer program design, which combines on-the-job training, hands-on academics, and youth development components.

By providing entry-level jobs that give young people an introduction to a variety of career paths, the museum helps Explainers to become responsible, self-respecting members of their community.

"The explainer program was really my first introduction to the world of science as a possible career," a recent alumnus said. "It was the first time I felt that being interested in science was considered 'cool,' and that's

"The explainer program was really my first introduction to the world of science as a possible career."

a pretty huge thing for a self-conscious high school student. I learned how to interact with the general public, speak in front

of groups, break down scientific ideas into manageable and understandable chunks, and gauge the teachability and interests of my audience. I use all of these skills on a daily basis in my career."

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"I learned how to interact with the general public, speak in front of groups, break down scientific ideas into manageable and understandable chunks ..."

Nature Trail

San Francisco Zoo

www.sfzoo.org

The San Francisco Zoo has called Koret “a best friend for more than 25 years.” The Foundation has contributed generously to a long list of improvements at the Zoo, including the Koret Carousel Plaza and the thriving Koret Animal Resource Center, utilized by youth in the Zoo’s Nature Trail program as they learn to stimulate public interest in wildlife and conservation.

“Koret’s generous and long-standing support is helping transform the San Francisco Zoo into a national leader and the essence of what a zoo can be in the 21st century,” said Manuel A. Mollinedo, executive director and president of the Zoo.

The Nature Trail program, which will celebrate its 30th anniversary in August, trains teen volunteers to handle the hundred or so animals in the Zoo’s teaching collection, and to staff learning stations in the Children’s Zoo, where they engage visitors in wide-ranging discussions about the animals and their conservation. Some 250 young people are trained and supported each year, enhancing wildlife appreciation by more than 60,000 summer Zoo visitors.

The program is the first work experience for most volunteers, teaching them important lessons about teamwork and work ethics. Nature Trail volunteers develop confidence and self-esteem, and learn to communicate effectively with a wide range of people — lessons that will serve them well throughout their lives. Many youngsters return to the program year after year, and a surprising number go on to become Zoo employees! More than 15 current Zoo staff members started their careers in the Nature Trail program.

The Nature Trail, together with other Zoo education programs, provides a continuum of unique learning opportunities for youth, made possible through long-standing Koret support.



Photo courtesy San Francisco Zoo

Many Nature Trail docents go on to careers in wildlife and conservation.



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Careers in Science

California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco

www.calacademy.org

Every day at the California Academy of Sciences, visitors of all ages move eagerly across the museum floor, expanding their view of the natural world. A cadre of Academy educators helps focus and foster their curiosity. Armed with a microscope, a video camera, and a computer, 16-year-old Jenny has undergone months of training and testing to prepare her to answer visitors' questions. Today, she will try to convince them that an amoeba is incredible, even cool.

Jenny is one of 40 Careers in Science interns. Supported by the Koret Foundation, the program gives 35 to 45 high school and early college-aged students — especially those from traditionally underrepresented communities — singular opportunities to teach, to learn, and to do research in an authentic, paid working environment.

"It's not just about science... To me, it's really about achieving personal growth at a critical time in life."

"The Careers in Science program commits to supporting its interns for up to five years, until they age-out," said Margaret G. Burke, the Academy's director of education. "That promise is pivotal to fostering personal investment and to creating the stable environment responsible for delivering the program's life-changing experiences. Koret's dedicated support of Careers in Science in each of the program's 10 years has been the cornerstone of that commitment, enabling both the program and its students to fulfill their promise."

Last year, 144 students applied for eight positions. Interns work up to 15 hours per week during the school year, and up to 35 hours per week in the summer. They attend classes on core science concepts; they are tested before they can teach visitors; they learn with Steinhart Aquarium biologists; and they take field trips to learn sampling and observation techniques.

At a time when our nation's competitiveness in the sciences is under scrutiny, Careers in Science is a model for nurturing the next generation. Adding SAT tutoring as well as college application and scholarship information, the program has inspired all its interns to apply to college. In a recent study of Careers in Science alumni, 52 percent reported that participation in the program was the primary reason they continued their education.



Photo courtesy California Academy of Sciences

Krystle Danridge shows an ochre sea star to a young visitor at the Academy's Discovery Tide Pool.

"It's not just about science," one recent alumna said. "To me, it's really about achieving personal growth at a critical time in life."

When the Academy opens its new landmark building in Golden Gate Park in 2008, Careers in Science interns will be there as exemplars of the Academy's dedication to the future of American scientists. But you don't have to wait until 2008 to see them: They are at work now in temporary quarters on Howard Street in San Francisco. During your next visit to the Academy, look for the interns helping explore and explain the natural world. Jenny and her amoeba are waiting!

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Teens Exploring and Achieving in Math and Science (TEAMS)

Lawrence Hall of Science, Berkeley

www.lawrencehallofscience.org

On a recent Saturday in Berkeley, Michele Manos, Rose Murphy, and Claudia Cruz from the Kaiser Permanente Division of Research turned a group of young people into medical detectives, helping track down the cause of a serious epidemic. The epidemic was simulated as part of a youth program at the Lawrence Hall of Science, but there was nothing make-believe about the enthusiasm of the students discovering that science can be fun.

"It was great, really great," said Cruz. "A few of the kids disliked science before we worked with them, so this was a first for some of them."

Manos, Murphy, and Cruz are volunteer teachers with the TEAMS (Teens Exploring and Achieving in Math and Science) program at the Lawrence Hall of Science, which invites young people between the ages of 11 and 18 to learn about math and science. On this particular Saturday, TEAMS hosted visitors from Cinnamongirl, an organization dedicated to inspiring and empowering girls of color. But forget any images of students dutifully sitting in a stuffy classroom. Learning through TEAMS is hands-on, active, and fun.

While one team of medical lab researchers tested mock blood samples from affected patients, another learned how to take samples from living animals without harming them, and how to sample mosquitoes to understand how disease spreads. A third team interviewed infected patients to learn how to trace the epidemic back to its source. When each team's work was complete, the group drew its conclusion: West Nile Virus.

Manos, who used to teach creative drama for children, says it was great fun combining her experience as a teacher and a scientist to engage the students. But the lesson was more than that science can be fun. Naomi Stein, the TEAMS leader, says the three teachers gave the girls something even more valuable, according to youth development research: role models.

"The fact that three very busy professional women took the time . . . to help these students understand science made a big impression," Stein said. "They not only showed the students what science is all about, they showed that it is possible for women, and for women of color, to succeed at it."

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Visiting scientist Michele Manos of Kaiser Permanente's Division of Research works with youth from Cinnamongirls through the TEAMS program.

Photo courtesy Lawrence Hall of Science

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ZeumMasters

Zeum, San Francisco

www.zeum.org

Zeum is a place where youth and families use arts and technology tools to tell their stories, build their voices, and get inspired to create their own multimedia works of art.

Its ZeumMasters program is a structured, three-year employment and training program that focuses on developing advanced creative and technical skills with an emphasis on leadership development, community service, and mentorship. Teens ages 15 to 18, are hired each year to serve as paid Zeum visitor guides, facilitating the Zeum experience by assisting visitors of all ages in activities such as creating clay animation movies, music videos, and digital art.

"Koret has been an invaluable community partner and resource," said Zeum CEO Adrienne Pon. "Their generous support of the ZeumMasters Youth Initiative has enabled us to expand our reach and increase the quality of our training. Koret's support and guidance have been critical to our success."

Along with their employment, ZeumMasters receive training to advance their creative and technical skills from beginner to expert level, and third-year teens complete certification as a "master" in at least one area of expertise, such as animation, graphic design, or video editing.

In the museum's Animators' Studio, visitors can create characters, develop storyboards, and use various multimedia tools and processes to produce clay-animated, stop-motion movies. The Digital Workshop is a high-tech classroom with state-of-the-art computers, digital cameras, and printers where learners and teachers can experiment with digital animation, illustration, video editing, 3D modeling, multimedia presentations, web page design, Internet exploration, and collaborative projects. The Production Lab features full-sized video cameras, a green screen with background images, sound equipment, and a production booth where visitors can create music videos, dramas, or newscasts.

Placing young people in control of the creative process, Zeum offers them opportunities to excel individually, interpersonally, and innovatively.



The ZeumMasters program focuses on leadership development, community service, and mentorship for teens.

Photo courtesy Zeum

"Koret has been an invaluable community partner and resource ..."

Galaxy Explorers

Chabot Space & Science Center, Oakland

www.chabotspace.org

Graduates of Oakland's Chabot Space & Science Center's Galaxy Explorers program, funded by Koret since 2000, are now attending colleges that include UC Berkeley, MIT, San Francisco State University, and University of Southern California, as well as contributing to their communities through volunteer work with other nonprofit organizations.

"If Chabot had not kept me busy, I would have been on the streets with my friends," said Anthony Thomas, now a criminal justice major at Langston University in Oklahoma. "Chabot taught me how to manage my time and gave me confidence and direction."

In addition to participating in community outreach through the museum's science exhibitions, Explorers — mainly underserved and underrepresented high school youth — spend one Saturday each month engaged in personal development training designed to encourage responsibility, initiative, and leadership.

"Chabot taught me how to manage my time and gave me confidence and direction."

Subjects include personal budgeting; conflict resolution; and guidance for career, academic, and personal goals, based upon the True Colors career exploration program in collaboration with the Eureka Career Information System.

"I have seen so many youth gain the skills necessary to propel them into college and meaningful careers through Galaxy Explorers," commented Lisa Hoover, the Galaxy Explorer program coordinator. "We are very grateful to Koret for its support of this worthwhile program that has enabled the positive development of so many low-income and underserved youth."

Explorer teams include the Enviro Team, the Media Team, the Astronomy Team, and Community Outreach teams. Enviro team members lead a number of hands-on activities and demonstrations at the museum and in the community related to environmental science topics, including the solar car challenge, atmospheric science demonstrations, composting, gardening, and exploration of the watershed on which Chabot is located. The astronomy team fully refurbished a 16-inch Dobsonian telescope (which they named Maya, after poet Maya Angelou) that they now use when assisting visitors on the telescope plaza.

Serving 100 youth each year, Chabot's Galaxy Explorers exemplify Koret's goals in funding youth docent programs.

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Explorers explain how spacesuits keep astronauts safe.

CATALYST

Discovery Youth and Summer of Service

Children's Discovery Museum, San Jose

www.cdm.org

Community service, media production, and digital arts are the cornerstones of the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose's Discovery Youth and Summer of Service programs. In operation after school, on Saturdays, and during the summer, the museum's youth programs engage 10- to 15-year-olds in volunteer opportunities working with younger children in the museum's galleries.



Docents paint faces at the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose.

Photo courtesy Children's Discovery Museum

In the last year, youth collectively contributed more than 5,000 hours of service to their community during their free time. As one past participant told an outside evaluator, "The museum helped show me the impact I can have on the world, and all of the good I can bring about through community service."

In addition, young people gain valuable media skills as they learn video production, web design, and video editing, as well as software programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator. A media literacy component encourages young people to consider audience and message, and to analyze various industry techniques. Discovery Youth participants have developed their own website, www.getchy.com, and they create more than 20 other high-quality productions annually, including self-portraits that have been displayed throughout the community, including at Adobe Corporate Headquarters.

The programs' success is demonstrated in the number of participants who return each year, bring their siblings along, and continue their involvement with the museum as part of the Discovery Youth Leadership Team, or as staff members.

The Children's Discovery Museum is grateful to Koret for its generous support, which clearly makes a difference in the lives of young people!



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