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KIDS GET THE SCOOP ON POOP AT SANTA MARIA VALLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Bird Dung, Tar Pits and Storm Drains Star in Three New Educational Exhibits at Interactive Children's Museum

Santa Maria, California—Number two is now number one at the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum with the launch of the "Whose Poop Is That?" exhibit, which teaches children to identify birds by the nature of their "splay" or, for lack of a better word that makes children squeal, poop. Who knew that flying dung could be so much fun?

The exhibit joins Trouble in The Tar Pits and Storm Water Santa Maria Style as one of three new attractions at the 13,000-square-foot museum. Each exhibit is designed to teach, entertain and raise awareness in children of varying ages.

Whose Poop is That?

This new environmentally themed exhibit, supported by the Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund, explains all those bird droppings on your windshield and sidewalks. Visitors learn to name and identify local coastal and pelagic birds; understand avian diets; and match bird splay to the correct species. Using the museum's boat windshield, or "poop deck," as the setting, visitors learn that poop color, shape and consistency all relate to identifying birds, as well as evaluating their diet and health. There's more description and detail than even the average eight-year-old can imagine when it comes to bird dejecta. This exhibit is funded by the G. Allan Hancock Family with support from Altrusa International of Santa Maria

Trouble in the Tar Pits

"Trouble in the Tar Pits" is a highly interactive exhibit hosted by Leander, an extinct American lion. Leander invites kids to recover and identify fossils in "Pit 21," and then deposit them into a crate for scientific research. Meanwhile, an interactive floor mat, developed especially for the Discovery Museum by Animocations of Boston, helps kids learn about tar pits and associated animals. Children who choose to take on the role of Leander must "feed" Leander while avoiding the dangers of the tar pits. If Leander doesn't eat enough of the other animal species, such as bison, or, if he steps into the hot tar, the game will end. While highly educational, this exhibit also offers the chance to do some fancy footwork such as walking, leaping and feeding Leander.

Storm Water Santa Maria Style

What is in your drain? "Storm Water Santa Maria Style" follows the path that water takes from the street in front of a Santa Maria neighborhood to Santa Maria area parks. This exhibit teaches children that discharging old oil, cigarette butts or other contraband into the gutter and down the drain can ultimately be harmful to our environment, parks, wildlife and loved ones. Funded primarily by the City of Santa Maria Utilities Department, this exhibit offers an eight-minute video as well as the opportunity to follow water runoff from the curb to the park.

The Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum is located at the historic art deco-style Coca Cola Bottling Company at 705 S. McClelland Street in Santa Maria. It is the only hands-on children's museum in Santa Barbara County. Visit www.smvdiscoverymuseum.org for more information.