



Media Contact:
Tracy Shirer (tshirer@ctsciencecenter.org)
O: 860.520.2116, C: 860.817.1373
Connecticut Science Center | 250 Columbus Blvd | Hartford, CT 06103

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

700 Guests flock to Connecticut Science Center for Green Gala: Space Edition ***Adults enjoyed exhibits while raising \$580,000 for hands-on science learning***

Hartford, CT- October 2, 2013 – Adults in their “galactic chic” gala finery were dancing with Stormtroopers, flying over Mars, interacting with robots, and experiencing hurricane-force winds at the Connecticut Science Center’s Green Gala: Space Edition on Saturday, September 28. As they enjoyed the more than 165 hands-on exhibits the Science Center has to offer, gala guests also were furthering the organization’s educational mission. Green Gala: Space Edition raised \$580,000 for the Connecticut Science Center, eclipsing previous records for funds raised by the signature event.

The Green Gala is the organization’s annual fundraiser, drawing more than 50 sponsors and 700 guests. Lead sponsors this year were UTC, United Healthcare, Travelers, Stanley Black & Decker, Connecticut Joint Replacement Institute and Northeast Utilities companies Connecticut Light & Power and Yankee Gas. Proceeds from the event fund the Science Center’s work to bring scientific concepts alive for children and adults. Since opening in 2009, more than 1.3 million people have been served by the organization’s exciting and educational programming.

This year’s Green Gala theme was space. “Tonight we look to the skies to dream big,” said Connecticut Science Center President and CEO Matt Fleury. “We envision the next frontiers, not just for the Science Center, but for the 60,000 schoolchildren who visit on fieldtrips every year and the 300,000 kids and adults who come to the Science Center to explore the worlds of space, technology and all the sciences. Our Green Gala celebrates both the wonder of space and discovery, and the organizations whose generosity is the driving force behind the Science Center’s work.”

The theme allowed the Science Center to celebrate innovation and discovery, and imagine the important issues future scientists will tackle, which are showcased in some of its most popular exhibits. These include The Exploring Space Gallery, which delves into astronomy and astrophysics, and Invention Dimension, whose “wall of innovation” showcases Connecticut-born inventions as well as the creations of local school-age inventors.

In addition to the permanent exhibitions, guests found the space theme played out throughout the gala. Guests checking in got the first glimpse of the brand new Discovery Space Lab which will host educational programs on astronomy and earth science. Science Alley, the building’s main lobby, was transformed into a space command station with an intergalactic portal to shuttle guests to the event. The 501st Legion Connecticut Garrison dressed as Stormtroopers, Darth Vader and other intergalactic aliens entertained guests and circulated throughout the event. And hundreds of guests were in “galactic chic” metallic and black cocktail attire.

Guests also purchased twinkling, space-themed charms by the hundreds at the gala, with the \$20 cost dedicated to funding a visit for a deserving student from a high-need school district. Garden Homes Management Corporation and Science Center Trustee Lizabeth Zlatkus and her husband Richard matched each \$20 donation, multiplying the number of field trips to be awarded in the coming year.

All exhibit galleries of the Science Center were open for the evening, with elegant “nosh stations” and open bars spread throughout the building. Fleury explained that the event is held in the Connecticut Science Center itself to allow adults to experience its engaging exhibits firsthand. “It’s great to see hundreds of children every day making abstract science concepts come to life here,” he said. “This event gives the adults a chance to ‘play’ as well, so they can see just how much kids can learn through our programming about the environment, space, physics, health, and so much more.”

For the second year in a row, The Green Gala featured an awards presentation in which one corporation and one individual were honored for their leadership in education, particularly in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. This year’s honorees were The Travelers Companies, Inc. and Jared Cohen, Director of Google Ideas, bestselling author and visionary. In addition, a new award for outstanding leadership for Women in Science was presented by the Petit Family Foundation, as part of a joint initiative with the Connecticut Science Center. The inaugural recipient was Kimberly McLean, Principal Engineer at Electric Boat in Groton. Photo gallery available at www.CTScienceCenter.org/gala.

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About the Connecticut Science Center The LEED-Gold certified Connecticut Science Center, located in downtown Hartford, sparks creative imagination and an appreciation for science by immersing visitors in fun and educational hands-on, minds-on interactive experiences while maintaining an environmentally conscious presence. Serving more than 1,300,000 people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features 165 hands-on exhibits in 10 galleries and a range of topics, including space and earth sciences, physical sciences, biology, the Connecticut River watershed, alternative energy sources, Connecticut inventors and innovations, a children’s gallery, and much more. Other features include four educational labs, a 200-seat 3D digital theater, function room, gift store and café, and ongoing events for all ages. The Science Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut and New England, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration. The Connecticut Science Center is also home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, providing powerful professional development for educators. More information: www.CTScienceCenter.org or 860.SCIENCE.