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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Connecticut Science Center's STEM Educators team up with Sea Tea Improv for Unique Training

*"Improvise Training for Science Educators" strives to sharpen presentation skills*

**Hartford, CT, June 8, 2016**— The Connecticut Science Center's team of STEM Educators are a seasoned group of science educators accustomed to leading professional development workshops across the state through the Science Center's Mandell Academy for Teachers. On June 15, the accomplished group of facilitators will change roles and become participants in a unique workshop presented by Sea Tea Improv, a Hartford-based improvisational comedy company.

The *"Improvise Training for Science Educators"* workshop is designed to help develop presentation skills including refining key messages for audiences, becoming more aware of body language, building listening skills, and more. Improvisational techniques have proven to be a successful method for training scientists to develop their communication skills.

"We are looking forward to this engaging and fun opportunity to hone our presentation skills," said Hank Gruner, Connecticut Science Center Vice President of Programs. "While the workshop will allow us to learn and laugh with colleagues, the goal is not to turn educators and scientists into actors, but to free them to talk about their work more spontaneously and learn new approaches to connecting personally with audiences."

"Improv isn't just for comedians," Julia Pistell, Managing Director of the Sea Tea Comedy Theater, says. "In our experience working with nonprofits, schools, and companies, we find that encouraging adaptability, clear communication, and a sense of fun can inspire any workplace team to work better together."

The partnership is made possible by funding from the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement. Over the past three years, the Connecticut Science Center has been working in partnership with UCONN and the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement on a project (*Genome Ambassadors*) that connects graduate students with a team of high school students participating in the Science Center's summer youth program. With facilitation by the Science Center's STEM Educators and UCONN students, the teen ambassadors work together to collect information on what the public knows about the science of genomics and to design and test program/exhibit activities that promote a greater awareness of key genomic concepts. This work is helping to inform the planned new Genomics exhibit and Genomics lab that will be developed and installed at the Science Center as part of the *Science Forward* initiative.

The Connecticut Science Center hopes to be able to continue to offer the workshop in the future to the staff as well as the college and university students working on various projects, including the *Genome*

*Ambassador* program. Sea Tea Improv has extensive experience in improvisational training and has worked with LEGO, General Electric, and the Wadsworth Athenaeum among many other organizations. More about Sea Tea Improv can be found at <https://seateaimprov.com>.

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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 2 million people since opening in 2009, the Science Center features more than 165 exhibits in ten galleries covering 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 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 the home to the **Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers**, offering powerful Professional Development for educators. More information: [CTScienceCenter.org](http://CTScienceCenter.org) or (860) SCIENCE.

**About the Joyce D. and Andrew J. Mandell Academy for Teachers at the Connecticut Science Center**

The Mandell Academy for Teachers provides professional development programs for educators, offering training that supports rigorous science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) instruction and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Our programs transform classroom instruction, giving teachers the skills, tools, and confidence to increase interest and performance significantly in the sciences as well as other subjects.

Offerings range from multi-day workshops and week-long classes to multi-year, full school engagements with embedded Connecticut Science Center STEM Education Professionals for schools and leaders who have a vision for significant, lasting transformation in their teaching and learning environments.

With accreditation by Charter Oak State College, educators who participate in the Inquiry for Teaching and Learning series will earn graduate credits (3 credits per year for 3 years) toward a master's degree. For more information, visit [CTScienceCenter.org/Mandell](http://CTScienceCenter.org/Mandell), or call (860) 520-2179.