



DALLAS ARBORETUM

Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden

For immediate release:

**Dallas Arboretum Launches \$62 Million Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden on
September 21**

***8-acre Museum Features 17 Indoor/Outdoor Galleries Aimed at Educational and
Scientific Objectives***

Dallas, TEXAS, Fall 2013 – The spectacular result of nearly two decades of nationwide research will be revealed Sept. 21 as the iconic Dallas Arboretum unveils its \$62 million Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden, a sprawling 8-acre interactive garden designed specifically to address state and national science standards in life, earth and environmental sciences. The Dallas Arboretum is setting the gold standard for outdoor children's facilities with this garden – the only children's educational garden of its scope in the world.

A "museum without walls," children and adults will learn about science and nature in the 17 indoor and outdoor galleries that teach the areas in the prekindergarten to middle school curriculum standards that can best be taught outdoors. Some concepts include photosynthesis, pollination, the solar system, erosion and energy.

The Children's Garden aims to revolutionize the landscape of interactive learning through a unique blend of innovative technology, 150 interactive exhibits and natural elements. Among the engaging features are native Texas wetlands, a 240-foot treetop skywalk, a *Honey I Shrunk the Kids*-inspired world about the importance of plants and its parts, and a 9,100-square-foot Exploration Center equipped with the OmniGlobe. One of 50 in the world, the OmniGlobe allows interactive animations to demonstrate real-time weather with an eight second delay, ecosystems, climate-related images, atmospheric changes and the solar system.

"The Dallas Arboretum is widely recognized as one of the leading botanic gardens in the world with nearly a million visitors annually, but few realize that it is also a premier educational facility that teaches life and earth science to more than 100,000 children every year," said Dallas Arboretum Board Chairman Brian Shivers. "The opening of the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden will allow us to reach even more children and introduce them to the wonders of the world we live in through interactive exhibits based on the national and state curriculum standards for life and earth science."

Former U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Honorary Chair of the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden, said, "Science scores of American children are the lowest of all

academic areas tested, with earth sciences the lowest of all. If our education system is going to keep up with the needs for our country, we have to interest children at a much earlier age in science, engineering and math. I believe that the Dallas Arboretum's Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden does that by teaching science creatively."

Following an extensive search, the Arboretum assembled a design team comprising Dattner Architects as building architect, MKW + Associates as landscape architect and Van Sickle & Roller, Ltd. as exhibit designer. Construction began in 2011. Many sustainable features were incorporated throughout the garden such as recycled materials, planted roofs to reduce heat, low-flow plumbing, solar panels and a cistern that collects rainwater for irrigation.

The process of designing the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden has been different from that of other children's gardens. This garden has been designed first by reviewing the state and national science standards and selecting those for each age group that could best be taught in this outdoor environment. The Arboretum received valuable input from educational experts on how each topic could be best demonstrated through the outdoor space. They have reviewed each learning room's academic design goals, key messages and objectives, as well as the signage, exhibits, plants and features, and recommended modifications.

The program was also examined for accuracy by teams of science teachers and the Scientific Advisory Committee, chaired by Dr. Johann Deisenhofer, who received his Nobel Laureate Prize in chemistry for his contribution to the understanding of photosynthesis. Southern Methodist University's Annette Simmons Graduate School of Education, led by Dr. David Chard, dean of the school, has also advised on the academic design, and is evaluating and researching the effectiveness of the garden on children's learning of science. This ongoing relationship will yield research, analysis and formal evaluation reports.

The 17 interactive galleries:

- The Entry Plaza – A welcoming orientation area large enough to accommodate 200 people in a shaded amphitheater that offers the first bird's-eye view of the garden.
- First Adventure – This walled garden allows the youngest visitors to play in natural settings and be introduced to science. Its safe and enchanting features include a caterpillar maze, a sandbox, giant acorns and insects, mushroom seats and tables, a potting shed, a tree house, a babbling brook and a plant petting zoo.
- The Incredible Edible Garden – Vegetables, grains and interactive exhibits help children, particularly urban children, learn that food comes from plants. In this garden, they learn about good nutrition, the multicultural aspects of food and economic botany.
- The Orchard and Vineyard – This area is a beautiful extension of the Incredible Edible Garden, which teaches that food also comes from trees, shrubs and vines.

- Plants Are Alive – An inside look at the life of plants that helps young children discover how plants live and grow. In this area the plants are large, including 16-foot-tall flower-filled pots. Activities include a plant-part scavenger hunt and an area that teaches the parts of a flower by assembling a 3-D flower puzzle.
- Kaleidoscope – Located in a horticulturally beautiful area focused on plant formation and structures, it includes two kaleidoscopes—one of which is 6 feet long— to show patterns and shapes, refraction and reflection. The rest of the gallery shows the world of patterns, shapes and structures in nature and integrates concepts of science, math, art and architecture. Children also learn about fractals, tessellations, symmetry and the Fibonacci sequence.
- The Oasis – A rooftop display garden that is beautiful in every season, the Oasis offers a lovely high spot in the center of the garden for visitors to relax and view the nearby learning galleries. Programming changes with the horticultural display.
- The Texas Skywalk – An elevated walk that's 240 feet long through the tree canopy in the heart of the children's garden, The Skywalk invites visitors to discover the benefits of trees and demonstrates what lives in the treetops.
- Pure Energy – Here, children investigate how energy from the natural sources of wind, sun and water can be transformed into electricity for our use. An energy tower, shooting water pistols and sun blasters are additional features that teach these concepts.
- Habitats – This 500-linear-foot trail through a woodland ecosystem helps children learn about the interconnections among people, plants and animals. An adventure bridge, a 30-foot tree snag and a canopy walk above the habitat trail add excitement and challenge.
- Living Cycles – In this learning room, children observe change and the circle of life, from changing seasons and plant and animal life cycles to pollination, metamorphosis and decomposition.
- Earth Cycles – Children actively explore a cave, rock and water cycles, a weather station, fossils and the solar system. There are many interactive exhibits that teach weathering, erosion, decomposition, water cycle patterns, interactive weather forces, and the interactions of the sun, moon and earth.
- The Amazing Secret Garden – This maze offers children engaging rewards along the way to the secret garden. Changeable panels make the maze either more or less challenging for different age groups, and questions at turning points speed children to their goal.
- The Walk on the Wild Side – This discovery trail includes switchbacks with tracks in the path along the way to help visitors guess which native animal or plant is hiding around the next turn.

- Exploration Center with OmniGlobe – This 9,100-square-foot building employs innovative exhibits and interactive technology to engage children in all aspects of life and earth science exploration. Features include a plant lab for experiments, smart tables, CSI Mysteries to solve, a soil lab and the signature feature, the OmniGlobe. Located in the Globe Theater, the five-foot-tall OmniGlobe is one of five in Texas and the largest in the state. In fact, there are only 50 in the world. A touch screen transforms the sphere into high-tech models of planets—including Earth—moons and the galaxy. The programs demonstrate continental drift, ocean currents, population density, deforestation, hurricanes, tsunamis, geology and ecosystems. Weather events, such as an impending hurricane can be shown in real time, thanks to an Internet connect to NASA (delayed by seconds).
- Texas Native Wetlands– The largest learning room, Texas Native Wetlands is a 31,000-square-foot wetlands ecosystem experience with floating bridges, boardwalks through grass tunnels and a secluded wildlife blind where children can discover the adaptations of plants and animals living in a wetland environment. It's the best example of biodiversity in the garden.
- The Petroglyph Walk – Inspired by Native Americans, the Petroglyph Walk features large rocks with symbols and designs on them, depicting the messages used by ancient Americans to communicate.

The Children's Adventure Garden was made possible by the generous support of the City of Dallas and private and corporate donors. The lead gift was provided by Howard Meyers and his sons in honor of his wife and their mother, Rory Meyers, who is a longtime Dallas Arboretum board member and Education Committee chair. The Dallas Arboretum named the garden after her.

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One of the leading botanic gardens in the world, the Dallas Arboretum is located on the southeastern shore of White Rock Lake at 8525 Garland Road, Dallas, Texas 75218. A part of the Dallas Arboretum, the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden is located at 8657 Garland Road, Dallas, Texas 75218. More information can be found at www.dallasarboretum.org.

The Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week. Admission to the Dallas Arboretum is \$15 for adults (13-64 years old), \$12 for senior citizens, \$10 for children 3-12 years old. There will be an additional fee of \$3 each for members and non-members to enter the Rory Meyers Children's Adventure Garden, although members will receive a number of free passes based upon their membership level. Admission to the Children's Garden will require timed ticketing to prevent overcrowding and to enhance enjoyment for our guests. Advanced ticket purchases will be available in September online, in-person at our ticketing locations or at the time of admission to the Arboretum, if available at <http://www.dallasarboretum.org/>.

Additional resources:

- Website: www.dallasarboretum.org
- Informative Video: <http://www.dallasarboretum.org/RoryMeyers/index.htm>
- Photos: [Rory Meyers Dropbox](#)

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