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New Exhibition at Reuben H. Fleet Science Center Accelerates the Aging Process and Gives Visitors Tools to Slow it Down

“Aging for All Ages” Explores Mental, Physical and Social Issues of Aging

SAN DIEGO, Calif., May 8, 2006 – Showcasing some of the latest scientific research on the biology, psychology and sociology surrounding the aging process, a new interactive exhibition, **“Aging for All Ages,”** will debut at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center on May 27, 2006.

Designed and built by Reuben H. Fleet Science Center staff and made possible by a generous grant from the MetLife Foundation Partnership for Lifelong Learning, **“Aging for All Ages”** explores the aging process with interactive exhibits and demonstrations on how health and lifestyle choices contribute to wellness. The exhibition consists of three sections organized around themes of “Body,” “Mind” and “Community,” each employing video, hands-on exhibits, graphics and text to engage visitors.

Highlighting groundbreaking scientific research from the University of California, San Diego, the Salk Institute and other leading institutions, **“Aging for All Ages”** offers a glimpse into how aging affects basic bodily functions, ranging from muscles and bones to the heart and brain. Age-related conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, osteoporosis and Parkinson’s disease are examined as illustrations of how aging can affect the brain and body.

By 2030, 19 percent of people living in the San Diego region will be aged 65 years or older. To emphasize the importance of social and community involvement to successful aging, a major part of **“Aging for All Ages”** is devoted to sharing the stories and anecdotes of San Diego seniors. Video interviews of more than a dozen San Diego-area seniors are showcased on a large plasma screen, enabling visitors to learn how San Diegans have contributed to the community and are still fulfilling active and vital roles well into their 80’s and 90’s.

Located adjacent to the Fleet’s IMAX® Dome Theater, **“Aging for all Ages”** features:

- “Face Aging,” an interactive exhibit which allows visitors to use the latest in computer morphing technology to actually watch themselves age. By following a series of instructions at a specialized computer terminal, they can progressively age their own face and view what it might look like at any age up to 70 years old. To demonstrate the profound effects of lifestyle choices, visitors may compare their appearance at a given age with and without the effects of smoking, obesity and excessive exposure to sunlight.
- “Tone Your Bones,” a hands-on exhibit that uses a plastic thighbone to demonstrate stress patterns in healthy bones and the importance of physical activity to preventing bone loss and conditions such as osteoporosis.
- “Think Fast!,” a fun and challenging exploration of how quickly people of different ages react to a falling stick, illustrating how age is not the only factor affecting reaction times.
- An explanation of the difference between adult stem cells and embryonic stem cells, and the latter’s potential for treating aging-related conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, and other diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.
- The latest research findings on Alzheimer’s disease, impacts of ultraviolet radiation on the skin and the powerful influence of positive attitudes and coping styles on successful aging.

Complementing the new exhibition, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center recently began offering a monthly program for senior citizens. **Senior Mondays** take place on the first Monday of each month (holidays excluded), offering seniors (65+) the opportunity to visit on the quietest day of the week and enjoy the Fleet’s seven interactive Exhibit Galleries and one IMAX film for only \$5. Starting on June 5, the Fleet will also offer special educational programming as part of Senior Mondays. Programming on June 5 will focus on aging and the human brain, and will feature Dr. James Brewer, neurologist and researcher at UC San Diego. Dr. Brewer will discuss changes in cognition that occur normally with age and the more extreme changes that occur due to diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease.

“Aging for All Ages” is funded by a grant from the MetLife Foundation Partnership for Lifelong Learning, with additional support provided by Aging and Independence Services, a division of the County of San Diego’s Health and Human Services Agency. Featuring bilingual exhibit instructions as well as a companion guide in Spanish, the exhibition will remain on display for approximately one year.

About MetLife Foundation

MetLife Foundation was established by MetLife to continue the company's long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation supports programs that improve education, promote health, encourage parental involvement and family engagement, and help revitalize neighborhoods and stress accessibility and inclusion. In recent years, a focus on Alzheimer's and aging issues has been added. MetLife Foundation stresses education in all its programs. Recognizing the vital role the arts play in building communities and educating young people, the Foundation contributes to arts and cultural organizations across the United States, with an emphasis on increasing opportunities for young people, reaching broad audiences through inclusive programming, and making arts more accessible for all people. For more information about the Foundation, please visit its Web site at www.metlife.org.

The purpose of the MetLife Foundation Partnership for Lifelong Learning program is to increase science education opportunities for people of all ages and encourage exhibitions that promote a better understanding of aging. The Foundation awarded grants to twenty-six science museums, selected from a pool of eighty-six museums that submitted proposals.

About the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center

With exhibits to touch, virtual reality to experience, IMAX films to watch and fun to be had, the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center ("the Fleet") offers an educational, entertaining experience for visitors of all ages. The Fleet features seven galleries of exciting, hands-on science exhibits, as well as major traveling exhibitions. Our 76-foot IMAX Dome Theater, the first in the world, presents the biggest films on the planet, planetarium shows and more. Its unique configuration wraps the audience in images and provides the illusion of being suspended in space. Ride COMET IMPACT, the 23-passenger motion simulator for an out-of-this-world flight into the path of an Earth-bound comet. KID CITY offers interactive fun and learning for preschool-age children (infants through age six). Plus, the Nierman Challenger Learning Center offers the experience of living and working in space.

The Fleet is located at 1875 El Prado, two blocks south of the San Diego Zoo on Park Blvd. The Fleet is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the public's understanding and enjoyment of science and technology. Admission to the Fleet and one IMAX film: Adults: \$11.75, Seniors (65+): \$9.75, Juniors (3-12): \$8.75. Visit www.rhfleet.org or call 619-238-1233 for show times and hours of operation.

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