



NEWS RELEASE
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**Discovery Place Renovation Reaches Grand Finale with
New Exhibitions**
World Alive celebrates Earth's colorful, quirky and amazing species
Fantastic Frogs exposes astounding superpowers of survival and adaptation
Open Sunday, June 27

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – June 27 will signify a new chapter in the 29-year history of Discovery Place as it opens the doors to reveal a fully renovated, re-conceptualized Museum filled with brand-new, original exhibitions. To cap off the 18-month, \$31.6 million renovation, Discovery Place will unveil its highly anticipated *World Alive* and *Fantastic Frogs* exhibitions, as well as host a Public Free Day.

“We are exceptionally proud to introduce a new, reimagined and contemporary Discovery Place to the community,” said John Mackay, president and CEO. “Our new Museum is filled with intriguing experiences that capture the imagination and engage people in the wonder of science.”

World Alive, an extraordinary celebration of Earth’s biodiversity, will be the Museum’s largest exhibition and includes a new, spectacular aquarium, an exotic rainforest, a biodiversity gallery showcasing biomes from around the planet, and two new hands-on labs for inquiry-based learning. Museum-goers can immerse themselves in diverse habitats filled with live species, lifelike wildlife photography and close-up access to thousands of artifacts from Discovery Place’s collection.

The wonder and interconnectedness of the world will literally be at guests’ fingertips as they contemplate the uniqueness of organisms and creatures from across the globe. Visitors will be inspired by the richness and variety of species and ecosystems and understand their importance to the overall health of the planet.

“The health of Earth and human existence rely upon the lifeforms and ecosystems around us,” said Mackay. “The more we can spread the message about the importance of biodiversity, the more we help our planet flourish and remain robust.”

In *World Alive*, visitors trek through a rustic and natural rainforest habitat from a “swinging bridge” which overlooks a tropical landscape brimming with life including live species of lizards, birds, frogs, stingrays, palms and epiphytes. Notable new residents to the rainforest include the crested wood partridge [*Rollus rouloul*], freshwater stingray [*Potamotrygon sp.*], Madagascar giant day gecko [*Phelsuma madagascarensis*], red-faced parrot finch [*Erythrura psittacea*] and Jambu Fruit-dove [*Ptilinopus jambu*]. In the exhibition’s aquatic habitats, fifteen tanks of various sizes make up 24,000 gallons of seawater. Guests are introduced to global underwater ecological communities including a live Indo-Pacific coral reef with chocolate clownfish [*Amphiprion clarki*], sea apples [*Pseudocolchirus violaceus*], mandarin fish [*Synchiropus splendidus*] and many other species, as well as a seafloor reef rubble habitat featuring white-spotted bamboo sharks [*Chiloscyllium plagiosum*], zebra sharks [*Stegostoma fasciatum*], blue-spotted stingrays [*Taeniura lymma*] and other benthic creatures. A special North Carolina saltmarsh environment illuminates creatures native to the state’s coast such as the oyster toadfish [*Opsanus tau*], striped burrfish [*Chilomycterus schoepfii*], and brown sea cucumber [*Sclerodactyla briareus*]. As visitors progress further through the aquatic experience into the Adaptation Room, they encounter a menagerie of bizarre and brilliantly-hued species of sealife including moon jellyfish [*Aurelia aurita*], Atlantic lined seahorse [*Hippocampus erectus*] and long tentacle anemone [*Macroactyla dorensis*].

Cross-global ecosystems meet in *World Alive*’s biodiversity gallery, which features more than 300 mesmerizing photographs of life from different regions, cultures and ecosystems. At the center is a large fiber-optic globe highlighting biomes from around the world. Each biome is accompanied by original compositions of music blending instrument and native sounds. By pressing corresponding buttons, guests can create a rich mix of global harmony.

Guests become scientists in *Explore More Life* and *Explore More Collections*, the final two of three new interactive learning labs that provide opportunities for hands-on, real-world experimentation and observation in dynamic learning environments. In *Explore More Life* visitors test ideas related to the themes of biodiversity and interdependency as well as study the connections between humans and nature, all in a setting that encourages stewardship for the environment. *Explore More Collections* encourages ethical and responsible collecting of items from and related to the natural world. As part of a new educational paradigm at the Museum, professional experts from

academic institutions, corporations and community partners are engaged in helping to create and design contemporary scientific lab programming for the *Explore More* labs.

Also opening is *Fantastic Frogs*, an exhibition featuring remarkable live frogs from all over the world with unique survival adaptations. Frogs have evolved to become masters of disguise as well as escape artists in order to attract mates, deceive predators and simply survive. From the bones of the hairy toad [*Trichobatrachus robustus*] that break reflexively and shoot out from the toe pads like claws, to the color-cued unken reflex of the yellow bellied toad [*Bombina variegata*], to the golden poison dart frog [*Phylllobates terribilis*], the world’s most poisonous frog, *Fantastic Frogs* emphasizes the “superpowers” that individual species of frogs have developed and honed over time. The exhibition uses a graphic novel approach throughout, incorporating spectacularly-colored wall and panel illustrations to depict how frogs live lives full of action, constantly struggling to fend off foes.

To celebrate the conclusion of the renovation, Discovery Place will host a Public Free Day concurrently with the opening of *World Alive* and *Fantastic Frogs* on **Sunday, June 27 from noon – 5:00 p.m.** Museum admission will be free to all guests.

Discovery Place Summer Operating Hours are Monday – Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Sunday noon – 5 p.m. Admission to Discovery Place is \$12 for adults (14-59); \$10 for seniors (60 and older) and \$9 for children (2-13); free for children younger than 2 and Members. Discounts are available for groups of 15 or more.

About Discovery Place

Discovery Place is located in uptown Charlotte at 301 N. Tryon Street. Convenient parking is available in the Museum’s parking deck - the Carol Grotnes Belk Complex - at the corner of Sixth and Church Streets. For more information about Discovery Place, call 704-372-6261 or visit discoveryplace.org.

One of the top hands-on science museums in the nation, Discovery Place provides ever-changing, entertaining facilities that engage the public in the active exploration of science and nature. More than a half-million people from all over the United States visit Discovery Place, its IMAX Dome Theatre and Charlotte Nature Museum each year. Discovery Place is supported, in part, with a Basic Operating Grant from the Arts & Science Council.

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