



Summer Of Science

*SMLI continues
to serve community*



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It might not seem like it after the hot start to September, but summer is winding down. The Science Museum of Long Island just wrapped eight weeks of camps and events, bringing another successful season of discovery and learning to a close.

The past few years have certainly been challenging for everyone. Last year, there

was uncertainty right up to the last minute. This year, things seem to have found their equilibrium. "It definitely was back to like a full-blown summer camp, which was really nice...It was definitely the first time we were at max capacity (since the pandemic). (Last year) two weeks before camp started, they gave us permission to have it. I would say this year though, the focus got back on the science aspect of things," said Kristen Laird, executive director of the Science Museum. "One really fun thing we do is the sleepover for the older kids at night during survivor week, where they do a campfire and sleep in their tents."

With eight weeks of themed camps, there

is something for everyone. Participants explored chemistry, dinosaurs, space, marine ecosystems, biology, survival/ outdoor skills, engineering and forensics. "(The campers are) always doing a great combination of indoor and outdoor activities, regardless of what week of camp it is. We do eight individual themed weeks. Each of them highlight a different area of science, which is great because families can sign their kids up based on a theme that they really, really love," said Caitlin Orellana, director of education. The camps also feature a talent show and craft projects.

Because the Science Museum has been in operation since the sixties, multiple generations

of young people have been impacted by its programs. A previous director organized a trip to dig for fossils, and one of the participants on that trip had a camper in this year's dino camp. "One of the most amazing things I think is, because we've been here for so long, camp has a generational aspect to it," Laird said.

Another aspect of the Museum's mission is their ecosystem restoration project. "I feel like this summer we really gained a lot of traction with our ecosystem restoration and community interest. We've gotten almost all of our kudzu cleared out. We worked with Sands Point Preserve to give them some advice about the people we used to start clearing our invasives,





(Photos by the Science Museum of Long Island)

and now they've started clearing the invasives on their Preserve. This community awareness and attention was really gratifying to see because part of the magic of this place is a 36 acre preserve full of nature, and when that ecosystem is destroyed, that magic is destroyed, too."

Live at Five, the Museum's concert series, also wrapped a successful season despite some events being canceled for air quality issues. Laird said the concerts bring the parents into the museum experience and open up the facility to the community. "It's just growing as a community event. It's a really great opportunity to see the kids and the adults enjoying the preserve, the activities, and the live music,"

Laird said.

This community connection is evident in the financial investment of local organizations. "Because of funding from the Manhasset Community Fund, the Museum was able to fully air condition the building this year, making it the "coolest" camp so far," Orellana said. The ecosystem restoration project was supported by the Greentree Foundation's Good Neighbor Fund, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation / Long Island Sound Futures Fund and the Nassau County Soil & Water Conservation District. Additional contributions came from the Peter and Jeri Dejana Foundation, a sponsor for the 2023 Live at

Five Outdoor Concert Series.

The Science Museum has an after-school program on Tuesdays and special programming during school breaks. Orellana said, "A lot of families refer to them as like mini camps. Anytime kids are off from school, whether it's for Veterans Day or for like the full December break. We do a holiday workshop."

As for events, the next big to-do at the Science Museum of Long Island is a pumpkin smash. This takes place November 5 and includes food and drink and activities. Daisy the Great will be performing fresh off their European tour.

