



Museum of Nature and Science

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**GOING “BEYOND ITS WALLS” TO GREATLY EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH,  
PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE LAUNCHES *THE WHYNAUTS*,  
A NEW 10-PART VIRTUAL STEM SERIES IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH**

*With a desire to enrich STEM education and help alleviate the learning losses aggravated by COVID-19, the high-energy, TEKS-aligned episodes are projected to reach 250,000 Texas students this year*

**DALLAS (May 20, 2021)** – At a time when education systems are facing the challenges of the pandemic – and field trips are on hold – the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is launching an engaging 10-part, STEM-focused virtual series called *The Whynauts*.

Designed to make science relevant, exciting and accessible, the academically aligned episodes feature charismatic scientists along with diverse youth actors ages 10-15. They will lead students on a fun, knowledge-packed journey of science exploration through the Perot Museum exhibit halls and some of North Texas’ best-known landmarks, including the Dallas Zoo and Trinity River. The digitally enhanced, bilingual adventures – with dialogue in English and Spanish – are available at [perotmuseum.org/whynauts](http://perotmuseum.org/whynauts). Episodes 1 and 2 are launching today, and the remaining eight will roll out during the summer. The 10 episodes and supporting educational materials are complimentary through the 2021-2022 school year.

Developed in conjunction with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards, these brief videos -- under 15 minutes each – are part of an entire suite of learning materials, including educator resources with robust lesson guides, enrichment activities, at-home activities and more, making them ideal for parents and educators alike. Providing age-appropriate content for grades K-8, the episodes focus on three categories: physical science, earth science and life science. Topics vary – from space and weather, to engineering and chemistry, to plant and animal adaptations, paleontology and plate tectonics.

In the 2018-19 school year, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science served more than 2,000 schools and 235,000 students through field trips and school outreach programs. When the pandemic hit in 2020, the number of field trips dropped to zero.

“The pandemic put in-person field trips and school outreach on hold, abruptly taking away the opportunity for countless students to have those crucial ‘ah-ha’ moments. And we know from extensive data and our own personal knowledge that those experiences are so critical to sparking a life-long interest in STEM,” said Dr. Linda Silver, Eugene McDermott Chief Executive Officer of the Perot Museum.

“*The Whynauts* will not only address this immediate, critical need, but will also live on long beyond the pandemic, allowing us to also reach students who typically cannot come to the Museum, including those from rural towns or cities where distance is a barrier to visitation,” added Silver.

A primary goal of the series is to ensure all children, especially diverse audiences, see themselves represented prominently in STEM fields. Multiple episodes will feature scientists including several **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) IF/THEN**® Ambassadors – female STEM innovators who serve as national role models. The episodes also feature a former astronaut, Perot Museum paleontologists, a Texas Instruments engineer, a Telemundo meteorologist, and a Top Chef contestant along with STEM experts from SMU, the Dallas Zoo, John Bunker Sands Wetland Center and

other local organizations.

Silver says the Museum aims to reach approximately 250,000 students this inaugural year with an aspiration to quadruple that number next year. To date, more than 40,000 students have registered for the pilot, and several school districts have already incorporated *The Whynauts* into their curriculum.

Planning for *The Whynauts* began more than a year ago, and collaboration played a key role in developing the program. Perot Museum educators spent last summer in focus groups with 30 school-district representatives to better understand how the Museum could provide support through virtual-learning programs. All agreed that virtual programming featuring STEM workforce development would be a major asset.

With that charge in place, the Museum partnered with local and national organizations to serve as advisors, including **Seeds 2 STEM, United to Learn, Uplift Education, and Teach For America**. Additionally, the Museum partnered with David Lozano of **Cara Mía Theatre** – a local writer, director and community activist – to consult on the project to ensure cultural competence and high-quality bilingual content.

“With *The Whynauts* program, we’ve further cultivated our mission to serve all minds, not only through in-person experiences at the Museum but also through innovative outreach that extends far beyond our walls,” said Dr. Silver. “We may be facing years of learning loss, especially in the sciences – a byproduct of this historic pandemic – but now we are better equipped to deal with these new challenges, help close the COVID learning gap, and be a resource for even more students, parents and school districts.”

Major sponsors of *The Whynauts* are the **Perot Foundation, The Lamar Hunt Family and Lyda Hill Philanthropies’ IF/THEN © Fund at Texas Women’s Foundation. PetroCap sponsored the pilot and Texas Instruments** the engineering episode. **NBC 5** and **Telemundo 39** are the media sponsors for the weather episode.

The Perot Museum partnered with **Groove Jones** to direct, script and produce the series.

For details and to view *The Whynauts* episodes, go to [perotmuseum.org/whynauts](http://perotmuseum.org/whynauts).

***NOTE: To obtain the news release, photos of *The Whynauts* and more, please go to [perotmuseum.org/press](http://perotmuseum.org/press).***

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***About the Perot Museum of Nature and Science.*** A top cultural attraction in Dallas/Fort Worth and a Michelin Green Guide three-star destination, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is a nonprofit educational organization located in the heart of Dallas, Texas. With a mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the Perot Museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor and outreach experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. A trusted science resource for all of North Texas, the Museum is committed to preparing the next generation of STEM workers by supporting K-12 schools and educators through highly accessible programs. The 180,000-square-foot facility in Victory Park opened in December 2012 and is now recognized as the symbolic gateway to the Dallas Arts District. Future scientists, mathematicians and engineers will find inspiration and enlightenment through 11 permanent exhibit halls on five floors of public space; a children’s museum; a flexible-space, traveling exhibition hall; and a theater. Designed by 2005 Pritzker Architecture Prize Laureate Thom Mayne and his firm Morphosis Architects, the Victory Park museum has been lauded for its artistry and sustainability. To learn more, please visit [perotmuseum.org](http://perotmuseum.org).

***About Groove Jones:*** Groove Jones is an award-winning creative and technology studio that specializes in developing immersive experiences and entertainment. For more information visit - <https://www.groovejones.com/>

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