

Maturango Museum Docents - 2021 Programs

Animals on the Edge (Endangered Species) focuses on the ways animals become threatened or endangered; shows which desert animals are at risk.

Art Experiences teach the elements of line, shape, form, space, color/value and texture; each lesson includes a hands-on art project.

Bats program focuses on the different species of the only flying mammal; it emphasizes desert bats, echolocation, and their beneficial behaviors.

Beth Armogida Planetarium is a portable planetarium that requires an indoor space at least 11 feet high and 20 feet in diameter. We can teach and display stars, galaxies, the sun and other wonders of outer space. The planetarium can be used in the Museum or as outreach.

Birds program focuses on the basic biology and structure of birds; it covers the tiniest hummingbirds, the raptors, roadrunners, and song birds (birds that migrate as well as the desert dwellers). This presentation includes many prepared bird specimens.

Bones program focuses on skulls, ribs, skeletal pieces of animals and illustrates how bones provide support and protection. Bones also give clues to each particular animal's identity (reptile, mammal, or bird), lifestyle, and adaptations.

Canines and/or Felines program encompasses various programs describing the lifestyles and adaptations of these desert mammals. We have several mounted specimens, skulls, and bones to show.

Children's Hour is a story hour for preschoolers. Docents read from picture books, do action poems and songs and provide a craft activity. The children always get involved in the songs and action poems. Usually the Children's Hour is on a flex Friday once a month but check the website for dates.

Desert Alive presentations highlight local plants and animals and emphasize the adaptations that allow them to survive in the unique Upper Mojave Desert environment.

Earthquakes program explains why and where earthquakes occur. The program focuses on types of faults and some of the local faults. A docent has prepared some great hands-on materials to illustrate earth movement.

Ethnobotany program features the plants that early people, desert foragers, used for food, medicine, tools and shelter. Many of the native plants are identified in photos and actual samples to illustrate the different ways they were used.

History of the Indian Wells Valley and Surrounding Area begins with the arrival of some European explorers and continues with the development of our valley and surrounds, including the miners, homesteaders, and military. It focuses on Ridgecrest, Inyokern, China Lake, and Trona through photographs and stories.

Insects program takes a close-up look at insects, their physical characteristics, abilities, adaptations, and kinds of metamorphosis. Usually the program includes a brief discussion of arachnids since they are also invertebrates. Often we bring materials so the students can “build” their own insects.

Native Americans or First Peoples program explains how local, desert Native Americans survived in the desert environment during the last 1,000 years. It includes examples of tools, baskets used, how food was prepared, and types of shelters that were built. We have many hands-on artifacts or copies of artifacts for students to manipulate.

Petroglyphs program provides an introduction to the petroglyphs, how this rock art was made and where. The Coso Mountains contain the largest known concentration of rock drawings in the Western hemisphere.

Reptiles program features the lizards, snakes, and tortoises of the Upper Mojave Desert. The presentation includes identification and prepared local species, their characteristics, adaptations, and habitats. Poisonous and species protected by the U.S. government are also discussed. If available, live specimens are included in the program.

Rocks and Geology presentations examine sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks. It discusses rock specimens and minerals in the context of local area geological events. Plenty of hands-on in these programs!

Volcanoes program highlights the eastern side of California as a geologically active area in its history. Samples of volcanic (igneous) rocks and geological maps are shown. Volcanic eruptions, earthquake faults, cinder cones, obsidian domes, explosion pits, lava flows, hot springs and the Long Valley caldera are explained. Docents also bring a small, model volcano to demonstrate an eruption and lava flow. We use baking soda, vinegar, dish soap and red food coloring or red Jell-O. Lots of fun!

Weather on the High Desert program explains what weather is and the factors that influence the weather. How can the desert be so hot and dry and also get winter snows and even rainbows? The program has a good demonstration of the water cycle and air pressure.

Wildflowers program presents colorful slides of our many Indian Wells Valley wildflowers. The parts of a flower are shown. Sometimes the students build a flower.

For any questions, contact Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator (760) 375 6900 (museum)
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