

PRESS RELEASE
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SB Museum of Natural History Seeks Volunteer Educators

Docent team engages students and families on-site and online

- Virtual Docent Open House: Mon, Sept 13, 10:00–11:30 AM on Zoom
- All ages and backgrounds welcome, no experience necessary, bilingual English/Spanish a plus
- Learn more at sbnature.org/docents

SANTA BARBARA, CA— The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History is hosting an online open house for people of all ages and backgrounds with a passion for science!

The Museum invites you to turn your curiosity about the natural world into a productive use of your free time by joining their corps of volunteer educators. Help share science literacy and empower the next generation of Earth's stewards by facilitating school programs, leading tours, and interpreting interactive exhibits.

"When I'm here, I feel that I make a difference," says Docent Glenn Grayson. "I think everybody here feels that way."

Grayson has been educating at the Museum for five years, experiencing the wide range of training and duties available to docents. He's observed firsthand how the challenges of educating during the pandemic forced the Museum and its volunteers to adapt. "I think the Museum is very resilient. We've opened and closed, and opened and closed, and still, the integrity of the Museum is there, because of the people."

The Museum and its versatile educators invested in technology and skills that carried their messages about science, nature, and culture far from the Mission Canyon campus. Select educators can volunteer from home and reach students all over the world by leading the Museum's dynamic virtual field trips, but the core of docent work remains interacting in person with guests and students.

"If you just get one person, they find out something they didn't know—sometimes it's simple, like the fact that there's scientific equipment on Mars or that we had mammoths here—it's worth it for that 'aha moment.' That's why we're here," says Grayson. In addition to interpreting science, docents raise public awareness of the Chumash cultural heritage of the region, and how living Chumash descendants are carrying their culture into the future.

Becoming a docent requires no prior experience, although volunteers who are proficient in more than one language (especially bilingual English/Spanish) come with bonus communication skills that are greatly appreciated by the Museum's guests. With unique training opportunities like workshops with curators and other experts, docents can deepen their understanding and appreciation of the region, the planet, and the universe. "If you've always liked the natural world and wanted to know more about

SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM *of* NATURAL HISTORY

it, being a docent is a great experience,” says Grayson. There is no cost to participate, and docents receive free passes to the Museum.

Interested people can learn more about the program and sign up for the Zoom open house, September 13 at 10:00 AM at sbnature.org/docents.

New docents commit to attending training classes on Mondays 9:30–11:00 AM from September 20, 2021 through June 13, 2022. In addition to the Monday trainings for new docents, the work commitment for all education volunteers working with school programs is one weekday morning per week from 9:30 AM–noon. Scheduling is flexible.

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About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature. Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit sbnature.org.



Docents and other Museum volunteers team up to talk to guests about mammoths on the Channel Islands.

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Docents share globes of other planets among a variety of visual aids to help guests understand astronomical concepts.



Sh'amala Chumash educator Gina Mosqueda-Lucas leads docents in a workshop to make traditional tule dolls.