CATALYST SCIENCE DISCOVERY CENTRE: AN EXCITING PLACE TO BE!

Catalyst Science Discovery Centre is an Independent Discovery Centre and Museum offering a great range of Science lessons and interactive shows, along with 4 award winning galleries, to a wide audience from the North West and beyond.

Catalyst Science Discovery Centre is operated by an independent charitable trust and is located in Widnes in Cheshire giving great accessibility for the whole of the North West and surrounding regions.

The Trust has been in operation some 25 years with Catalyst starting its life as the Museum of the Chemical Industry. The building was extended some 15 years ago to enable
During weekends and school holidays, a range of additional activities is offered daily; typically these are interactive science shows and/or workshops in addition to make and take activities. Activities are varied from week to week in order to encourage families to make return visits.

The team is led by CEO Julie Burgess-Wilson (Jules) who, along with Chair of the Board of Trustees, Dr Tony Bastock OBE, has been responsible for managing a major change in its fortune from ailing Museum to dynamic Science Discovery Centre.

Jules comments "We believe that the work of Catalyst is vital to promoting the understanding of science and provides an exciting route to the enjoyment of scientific discovery outside of school. We cater for all ages and abilities. We do not expect to discover great scientists or provide the wider population that the work of Catalyst is vital to the development, ozone depletion and other pressing problems."
our programmes and the growth of our scientific influence. We cannot even be sure of survival with funding on this basis.”

ACCOLADES

Last year Catalyst won a national award from the Chemical Industries Association for Promoting Science and Engineering to Future Generations.

At a recent visit to open the latest developments, Lord Sainsbury commented, “It makes such a difference if children, from the very youngest age, are able to see what Chemistry can do and how it plays a vital part in our lives. These new facilities will encourage even more children to open their minds to what chemistry can do in the future and how it can enrich our lives still further.”

Steven Broomhead, CEO of the NWDA said: “Catalyst Science Discovery Centre is a unique attraction for the Northwest and the Agency is pleased to have played a part in its transformation. I am sure that the centre’s innovative new interactive facilities will help to inspire the scientists of the future, something which is vital to maintaining the Northwest’s reputation as a leader for science and innovation.”

And more importantly, a typical recent visitor: “I am writing to thank you for a wonderful visit my pupils and I had on the 9th March. We had our very own partying particles workshop, which was wonderful. Please thank Sue again. She has inspired the girls I brought with me, my current year 7s are really looking forward to their year 8 visit to your Discovery Centre.”

VITAL SUPPORT

CEO Jules comments “We believe that the work of Catalyst and other science centres across the nation is a vital requirement for today and the future. Stimulating an enquiring mind and giving rise to thought about our surroundings are essential if we are to be able to attract young scientists and innovators for the future and to help inform the public on the increasingly important scientific debates about topics such as GM Foods, Nanotechnology, Bio fuels and Sustainability, and I am passionate that we succeed in our endeavours. Centres like Catalyst can currently only exist through the passion, energy and tenacity of the trustees and staff; we strongly believe we must continue to attract greater audiences and deliver more Science to the public, but we can only do this with the appropriate funding.”

THE CATALYST COMPONENTS

Birth of an Industry

A museum gallery, charting the development of the Chemical Industry, supported by a large and growing collection of artefacts and papers relevant to the Industry and locality. Catalyst plans to continue to enlarge the collection and to develop artefact-handling sessions to engage the public.

Scientific

A deeply popular hands-on gallery for all visitors, Scientific offers individual exhibits which demonstrate Scientific principals and encourage visitors to discover and probe new concepts.

Observatory

A unique rooftop Observatory gallery affords stunning views from the Welsh hills to the Pennines and is accessed by a wonderful scenic glass lift. The observatory provides a fantastic space for learning about the environment and for viewing Science and Engineering in the locality.

Education Centre

This purpose-built Education suite provides 2 teaching studios and 1 multifunctional room. This space is used predominantly by schools but hosts the family science sessions in the school holiday periods.

A World of Opportunities - Championing Science Based careers

A highly acclaimed and unique careers gallery featuring young scientists who give a valuable insight into their jobs and career prospects via DVD clips and interactive displays. Young scientists profile their career, their path to success, providing advice for other young people. Young ambassadors tell like it is and answer the questions most people want to know: salary, the type of work involved, number of holidays, the good and the bad bits!

Alchemy Theatre

The state-of-the-art interactive Alchemy Theatre provides stunning 3D virtual tours, currently providing young scientists with a unique insight in to chemical plants, pharmaceutical development paths and recycling plants – completely unattainable by other means. A groundbreaking and unique concept in education and public engagement combines interactive voting with a “live” tour of facilities impossible to visit and 3D imagery.

Catalytic Laboratory

The exciting, state-of-the-art “Catalytic Discovery Lab” hosts a wide range of hands-on activities and experiments carefully designed to involve and inspire all. Catalyst actively encourages Pupils to participate in laboratory activities as soon as possible, for example pupils of around 8 years old are invited to “Become a Scientist”, where they learn how to conduct an experiment. Older pupils at KS4 have access to hands-on activities in a truly inspirational environment.

For further information visit www.catalyst.org.uk