



MUSEUM OF  
NATURE &  
SCIENCE  
DALLAS, TEXAS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHASE DONATES \$1.4 MILLION TO PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE & SCIENCE AND  
BIG THOUGHT TO MAKE LEARNING MORE FUN, INTERACTIVE AND ENGAGING**

*Goal of two gifts is to inspire creativity and curiosity in children  
and introduce them to exciting career opportunities*

**DALLAS (July 20, 2011)** – Today two prominent Dallas educational institutions – one that focuses on science and math education, the other on creative learning in schools and neighborhoods – received a huge financial boost when Chase announced \$1.4 million in gifts that will make learning fun, stimulating and interactive for thousands of Dallas-area children. Chase is donating \$400,000 to help fund Big Thought's *Thriving Minds* summer camp and after-school programs for elementary and middle-school students. Chase also is contributing \$1 million in support of the Bio Lab and related educational programming in the *Being Human Hall*, which will be part of the new Perot Museum of Nature & Science currently under construction in Dallas' Victory Park.

On hand to make the announcement and to salute the "community hero" wielding the big gifts were representatives from Big Thought, a nonprofit focused on building partnerships that allow all children access to quality learning opportunities both in and out of school. Also attending were Museum leaders currently overseeing the construction of the \$185-million Perot Museum of Nature & Science in Dallas' Victory Park. Also offering their thanks were Dallas Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Tennell Atkins and Jane Didear, the partnerships coordinator in Dallas ISD's community relations/communication services department. The announcement came as children explored cells under microscopes in the current Museum of Nature & Science in Fair Park and other children learned about wetlands and ecosystems at the Children's Aquarium.

"Chase has been a committed partner in helping to ensure that children have opportunities to learn, to be actively engaged in their communities, and to experience new ways of seeing the world," says Margie Reese, Vice President of Programs for Big Thought. "This investment will help us to continue to transform how we educate our children and how we prepare them to be responsive to the opportunities and challenges our communities will face in the future."

Big Thought's *Thriving Minds* middle-school camp is a full-day program currently operating at Fair Park and select Dallas ISD schools for four weeks in July. The camp – presented in partnership with Dallas ISD, the City of Dallas and dozens of community partners – involves nearly 2,000 sixth-through-eighth-grade students. Students at-risk of failing one or more classes are attending two daily blocks of academic instruction and one project-based block that integrate academic study with a specially designed project being completed at Fair Park institutions (e.g. – Star-mapping at the Museum of Nature & Science planetarium and water conservation with the Children's Aquarium and lagoon, etc.).

Chase's gift to Big Thought also will support the expansion of leading-edge programming to be implemented during the school year at several Dallas ISD schools located in South Dallas and the surrounding Fair Park neighborhoods. Effective practices at Charles Rice Learning Center will be expanded to Julia C. Frazier Elementary School and Paul L. Dunbar Learning Center to support community-based programs and to address specific campus needs, such as parent engagement and mentoring programs.

Chase's other gift will support the Bio Lab, which is part of the *Being Human Hall* and one of 11 halls of

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the new 180,000-square-foot Perot Museum. The Bio Lab will be a premier destination and signature feature within the *Being Human Hall* that will enable visitors to work hands-on in an interactive lab environment. Approximately 1,330 square feet, the lab will offer specific curriculum-based programs for school groups and public use. The Hall will examine the human body and human condition through the lenses of biology, technology and culture. Curriculum for the new Bio Lab will include exploration of four initial areas: cheek cells, antimicrobial testing, DNA extractions and giant chromosomes.

The \$1 million gift to the Perot Museum includes support for curriculum development and delivery as well as supplies for the Bio Lab programs, which will directly tie into the TEKS standards for math and science. Museum officials project that more than 40,000 students will participate in Bio Lab Programs each year, including those from Community Renaissance Neighborhood (CRN) areas, specifically in South Dallas and Fair Park. The Perot Museum is projected to open in early 2013.

“Chase’s commitment to science education is extraordinary. As our nation faces a shortage of science professionals, America could easily lose its global edge,” said Nicole G. Small, CEO of the Museum of Nature & Science. “Thanks to Chase’s generosity, this dynamic Bio Lab will make science exciting and relevant, engaging children and inspiring many to pursue careers in math, engineering and technology.”

Chase has 13,500 employees and more than 230 bank branches in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

“Everyone understands that education is the key to our future, but they may not realize the troubling shortage of people trained in math and the sciences. This \$1.4 million grant takes direct aim at that gap and also will boost academic achievement through support of innovative Middle School Summer Camps,” said Elaine Agather, Chairman of Chase in Dallas. “Chase is proud to partner with Big Thought and the Museum of Nature and Science, two wonderful organizations making a profound difference in the education of students across Dallas. Working together, I’m confident we will achieve great things for our city and our country.”

Today’s announcement wasn’t the first time Big Thought and the Museum of Nature & Science have collaborated to advance creative learning in children. Examples of their involvement include partnering to provide Dallas ISD elementary school students Museum programs during school hours. The Museum is also managing the Thriving Minds after-school program at Long Middle School. Additionally, Big Thought is designing and implementing an evaluation for the Museum’s Leaders in Science program. The two organizations plan to deepen their partnership in future years.

**NOTE TO EDITORS: The \$1.4 million grant will be announced at a news conference Wednesday (July 20) at 10 a.m. in the current Museum of Nature & Science in Fair Park. The event will offer news crews a chance to observe school children learning about wetlands and ecosystems at the Children’s Aquarium.**

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**About Big Thought.** Founded in 1987, Dallas-based Big Thought is one of the nation’s leading nonprofit organizations focused on improving public education through creative learning. Driven by its mission — to make imagination a part of everyday learning — Big Thought develops groundbreaking programs to address problem solving, life skills and workforce development, providing children with pathways to success. Through its strategic systems building and innovative partnerships, Big Thought now serves more than 300,000 Dallas children, families and teachers each year, both in and out of the classroom. Annually, Big Thought also delivers more than one million hours of programming and individual creative instruction. A model to cities across America, Big Thought has achieved national recognition, including the Americans for the Arts “2009 Arts in Education Award” and the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities “Coming Up Taller Award” in 2004. Learn more at [bigthought.org](http://bigthought.org).

**About the Museum of Nature & Science.** The Museum of Nature & Science – the result of a unique merger in 2006 between the Dallas Museum of Natural History, The Science Place and the Dallas Children's Museum – is an AAM-accredited non-profit educational organization located in Dallas's Fair Park. In support of its mission to inspire minds through nature and science, the museum delivers exciting, engaging and innovative visitor experiences through its education, exhibition, and research and collections programming for children, students, teachers, families and life-long learners. The facility also includes the TI Founders IMAX® Theater and a cutting-edge digital planetarium. The Museum of Nature & Science is supported in part by funds from the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, the Texas Commission on the Arts and HP. The Museum of Nature & Science also is building a new \$185-million museum on a 4.7-acre site in Victory Park to complement the Fair Park facilities. To learn more about the Museum of Nature & Science, please visit [natureandscience.org](http://natureandscience.org).

**About Chase.** Chase has more than 650 branches and more than 27,000 employees in Texas. We're working hard to support the communities that support all of us. Chase committed or helped raise \$8.7 billion for Texas governments and nonprofits in 2010. Chase is the largest SBA lender in Dallas and in Texas.

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