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New Exhibition Reveals “Life’s Secrets” Genome Exhibition to Open at San Diego Natural History Museum in January

San Diego, CA: December 13, 2005—The San Diego Natural History Museum will host *GENOME: The Secret of How Life Works*, a traveling exhibition new to the western states, from January 28 through May 1, 2006. The 5000-square-foot exhibition explores the human genome—a person’s entire set of genes—to reveal the mysteries of genes, delineate the last two centuries of discovery, and unravel the implications of gene therapy for the future of medical science and healthcare. Development of *GENOME* was funded by Pfizer Inc which has also given support for the San Diego showing.

“The understanding of the human genome opens up an entirely new frontier for health science research, and it is anticipated that it will lead to new therapies and cures for devastating diseases. However, many people are unaware of the genome or its potential to enhance our lives,” said Dr. Peter B. Corr, Senior Vice President, Science and Technology, Pfizer Inc. “We believe engaging and educating families through interactive exhibits such as *GENOME* will help them better understand how future discoveries can directly and positively impact their health.”

GENOME uses interactive displays, visually-rich environments and family-friendly activities that are specifically designed to help the public understand the genome’s function and its role in daily life. They include the following:

- *Giant Double Helix* An eight-foot-tall, 25-foot-long display of DNA’s double helix structure.
- *Discovery Theater* An opportunity to meet the minds that were instrumental in the discoveries leading up to the sequencing of the human genome.
- *Hereditary Slot Machines* A working slot machine that demonstrates the odds that children will inherit genes for certain characteristics.
- *The Cookie Factory* A visualization of protein production in terms that children and adults alike can grasp, with DNA, genes and proteins as the ingredients and recipes for “making” human beings.

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The exhibition will answer common questions and correct frequently held misconceptions that surround the human genome, tackling topics such as genetic predetermination, the nature of mutations and the very slight differences in genetic material that separate one human being from another.

“*GENOME* is an especially important exhibition to have at the San Diego Natural History Museum,” says the Museum’s Curator of Herpetology Dr. Bradford Hollingsworth, who is also acting as curator of the exhibition for the Museum. “In our active research programs, we sequence and analyze DNA ourselves, and we also collaborate with other researchers to provide tissue samples for analysis from our diverse collections. This research is instrumental for the conservation of species. *Genome* is also appropriate for San Diego because our region is one of the world’s biodiversity hotspots. The evolution of species’ genomes results in biodiversity.”

The Museum has scheduled an array of public programs in conjunction with the exhibition, including a lecture series, two family days, a “twincident” event, and an admission-free day. Details will be posted at www.sdnhm.org/exhibits/genome.

More information and a guide to *GENOME* are available in Spanish on line at <http://genome.pfizer.com/genoma>. Spanish-language interviews are also available.

The *GENOME* exhibition was made possible by Pfizer Inc and was produced by Clear Channel Exhibitions in collaboration with the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), a division of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research. For more information about the exhibition, visit genome.pfizer.com.

The San Diego Natural History Museum is “your nature connection” in beautiful Balboa Park. The Museum is open daily from 10 AM–5 PM, except for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Admission includes all exhibitions and films and is \$9 for nonmembers; \$6 for students, seniors, and military; \$5 for children 3–17; and always free for members. Phone: 619.232.3821. Website: www.sdnhm.org.

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