

Visit a Black Hole at Science Museum Exhibit

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. - *Black Holes: Space Warps & Time Twists*, an interactive exhibit on view at the Springfield Science Museum from January 30 through May 2, will reveal what we know, don't know, and think we know about one of the great mysteries of the universe.

Black holes are regions in space with gravity so powerful that light cannot escape, and where time and space are warped in unimaginable ways. The exhibit will guide visitors on a journey to the edge of these strange phenomena to discover how the latest research is turning science fiction into fact, challenging our notions of space and time in the process.

The Springfield showing of the exhibition is sponsored by a generous grant from United Bank.

Produced by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, the exhibit features interactive portions that were co-designed by teens from the Youth Astronomy Apprenticeship Program at MIT and the Galaxy Explorers Black Hole Youth Media Team at the Chabot Space & Science Center in Oakland, California.

Black Holes is designed like a space mission. At the start of their journey, visitors pick up a Black Holes Explorer's ID card, which they can use throughout the exhibit to collect discoveries and generate a personalized website that only they can access. The website serves as part personal diary, part observer's log, where a visitor can record observations, conclusions, questions, notes, and photos of their group and their activities. Photos and videos of the youth team exhibit collaborators, scientists and engineers will help guide visitors.

In the final portion of the exhibit, visitors step into an excursion pod and set off for the enormous black hole at the center of our galaxy. The challenge is to pilot your pod to an alien spacecraft wreck at the edge of the black hole and dive down to discover its hidden treasure – then live to tell about it. Prepare to be disoriented as you experience the black hole's dramatic effect on its environment, space and time. But be careful – you don't want to be left behind when your galactic cruise ship, the *Singularity*, departs. Unexpected emergencies could arise, causing a fall into the black hole itself.

Black Holes: Space Warps & Time Twists was funded by the National Science Foundation with additional major support from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

There will be a special exhibit fee of \$3 per person in addition to museum admission for all visitors ages 3 and up to see *Black Holes: Space Warps & Time Twists*.

The Springfield Science Museum is located on the Quadrangle at 21 Edwards Street in downtown Springfield, Mass. Free parking is available in the Edwards Street parking lots. The museum is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$12.50 for adults, \$9 for seniors and college students, \$6.50 for children 3-17, and free for children under three and museum members. General museum admission is free for Springfield residents with proof of address. The fee provides admission to all four Springfield Museums and the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden.

For information, call 413-263-6800 or visit www.springfieldmuseums.org.