

2013 Medals - Discovery

Speakers: Joe Adams, Kate Upton

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>> FEMALE SPEAKER: The National Medal for Museum and Library Services is the nation's highest honor for libraries and museums that are serving their communities in exceptional ways.

Discovery Science Center President Joe Adams and community member Kate Upton traveled to Washington from Santa Ana, California to receive the National Medal and spoke to IMLS about how the museum impacts the community.

>> JOE ADAMS: So the Science Center is about inspiring the youth of today to be able to tackle the challenges and advances of tomorrow through understanding science, and what I mean by that is to have hands on exploration of the world around us.

And then to be able to give the youth like Kate the opportunities and the excitement to say there is a whole lot to go forward to in this world that we need to know and that you can be a part of.

So we're not about collections. We're about hands on experiences and dissecting science and the world around us so that our audiences can understand the world better and have a better life going forward.

One of the things that we do that is unique about the Science Center is that we change the focus every month to be specific to what the students need to learn per grade level.

What I mean by that is that each month we change the Science Center up to focus on a grade and we say what do these students need to know that if you're in first grade? So there are twenty different topics within the science standards that the teachers are teaching in the classroom.

So we bring in and add demonstrations to help explain all of those concepts so that you can further understand be able to

achieve the objectives that the state wants each grade level to - to acquire.

>> KATE UPTON: I grew up with the Science Center actually. I went there when I was in elementary school and I experienced everything there was to experience and then when I was in high school and I needed volunteering experience for college, I went and volunteered there. I did member events there. I helped to manage some of the other volunteers due to my familiarity with the Science Center.

Then when I was in college and I needed a summer job, I worked there. Now I talk to people at events about how the Science Center has impacted my life by helping to keep my interest in science alive because I - I believe most kids are natural born scientists and I definitely was, so interested and curious about the world around them that going to the Science Center helped to nurture and preserve that interest.

>> JOE ADAMS: And you look at that. That curiosity is within us all. Now how do you continue to inspire that curiosity to be able to - to be a part of your entire life journey? That is what the Science Center can do and that is what we have been doing.

>> KATE UPTON: I'm a graduate student now and I'm getting my PhD in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology and I have to say that the Science Center helped to keep me on that path, helped to keep me interested because I knew that there were people who were interested in my success, who were engaged with me, and who knew that - told me that I could do science all those years, told me that I could do it.

>> JOE ADAMS: America is great because we are - we are many things, but it is also because we are creative and that we continue to have no bounds to allow us to explore our world around us, to let us be able to encourage more people from all types to be able to get out there and to help us advance the world of science and the world of science and the know-how and take that and break it down to the community.

So we want to inspire kids to be those scientists and designers and engineers and be creative and lead us.

>> KATE UPTON: Well my PhD is actually in astro chemistry. That is my area of research. It involves Titan, one of Saturn's moons which is of interest due to the fact that it is the only solid body in the outer solar system with a dense atmosphere.

This atmosphere is composed of 95% nitrogen and 5% methane, making it very similar to how earth may have been back when earth was just starting to get formed.

So Titan presents an interesting opportunity to possibly study the early stages of evolution of life on earth.

The second half is I am working on some instruments for a possible mission to Titan in the future and so I am in the early stages of that and I am working with JPL on a lot of those projects.

>> JOE ADAMS: Somebody working in NASA, coming up with like the latest of where we're going to be going in the future and maybe where - how does this whole Earth started in evolution? I mean, wow. Definitely the Science Center, we want to take science, make it friendly to all genders and all ethnicities, and we want to say look, the science is around you. And we want to inspire you to kind of go after it, challenge it, explore it, move us forward, and I am really proud of Kate and knowing of your success over the years and how you've been able to be able to take your beginning, continued it through, and now you're doing some really high level research out there.

It definitely bodes well for I think our community and as well look and say hey, look, this is where you can go.