



## PRESS RELEASE

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# SB Museum of Natural History Gala an Out-of-This-World Success

- Galactic Gala was held on April 15, 2023
- Raised over \$575,000 for Museum's education programs
- More information about the Museum at [sbnature.org](http://sbnature.org)

**[SANTA BARBARA, CA]** — The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History's 23rd Annual Mission Creek Gala took place Saturday, April 15. The astronomy-themed Galactic Gala was attended by 203 guests and raised over half a million dollars for the Museum's education programs.

Guests enjoyed a lovely outdoor reception around the Palmer Observatory, including the opportunity to see the Marschak Telescope, visit with Astronomy Programs Specialist Krissie Cook, sample astronaut ice cream, and enjoy the Tang-based signature cocktail Buzzed Aldrin. Guests made their way into Fleischmann Auditorium for the big décor reveal and dinner.

The auditorium was transformed to look like guests were in space, with a giant LED screen on the stage displaying images from the James Webb Space Telescope. The décor was designed by Joy Full Events, Inc. and Hogue & Co. There were five specially-themed tables that represented elements of the cosmos. The Milky Way Galaxy tableau, the Io Moon tableau, the Diamond Planet tableau, the Supernova tableau, and the Halley's Comet tableau were each generously sponsored and were uniquely designed to reflect the theme. Duo events provided the delicious dinner, and 13 Napa Valley wineries donated wine for the evening.

Each course started with a lesson from Krissie Cook about the James Webb Space Telescope image being displayed. Guests were whisked away to five destinations throughout the evening. After dinner, planetarium show presenter and Quasars to Sea Stars teen program participant Isabella Figueroa spoke passionately about why the Museum is so important. Museum President & CEO Luke J. Swetland made an appeal to the crowd and quickly raised \$208,000. The sold-out event was a huge success for the Museum, raising \$575,000 in total. The night ended with guests returning to the observatory to enjoy night sky telescope viewing with Cook and Astronomy Programs Presenter Sean Fox, and a late-night bite.

# SANTA BARBARA MUSEUM *of* NATURAL HISTORY

The Gala Honorary Committee consisted of Stacey Byers, Sheri Eckmann, Venesa Faciane, Elisabeth Fowler, Heather Hambleton, Ken Kelly, Barbara Evans Kinnear, Karen Nicholson, and Susan Parker.

The Museum aims to spark curiosity and instill a passion for nature, and maintains a commitment to providing exceptional educational programs for the Santa Barbara community. The Mission Creek Gala sustains the Museum's outstanding nature and science education programs, which touch the lives of more than 10,000 schoolchildren each year through school tours, classes, storytelling, and camps. The annual Gala has raised more than six million dollars for school programs since it began in 2000. The Museum Access Fund (MAF) is a scholarship program provided by the Museum to visiting school groups in need of financial assistance. Title I schools may apply for scholarships through the MAF application. This fund was created to provide access to the Museum programs for low-income schools. Donations also enable the Museum to provide programs at a reduced class rate to those schools which do not qualify for the MAF. Funds raised by the Museum's annual Gala enable the Museum to offer these reduced/waived fees.

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## About the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History

*Powered by Science. Inspired by Nature.* Founded in 1916, the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History inspires a thirst for discovery and a passion for the natural world. The Museum seeks to connect people to nature for the betterment of both, and prides itself on being *naturally different*. For more information, visit [sbnature.org](http://sbnature.org).



Diamond Planet, Supernova, and Halley's Comet tableaux in Fleischmann Auditorium.  
Photo by Baron Spafford

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Board Chair Brad Willis welcoming guests to the Galactic Gala.  
Photo by Baron Spafford



Staff event speakers and support Isabella Figueroa, Charlie Thrift, Krissie Cook, and Luke Swetland. Photo by Baron Spafford

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Sponsors Heather and Rob Hambleton and their table guests enjoying the Gala.  
Photo by Baron Spafford