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MIGHTY MICROSCOPIC MARVELS ON FULL DISPLAY AS *MICROBES RULE!* EXHIBIT OPENS AT LIBERTY SCIENCE CENTER DEC. 15

LSC's Newest Permanent Interactive Exhibit Uses Art, Music and More to Make Microbes Fun, Interesting and Accessible

Petition to Designate *Streptomyces griseus* as "Official Microbe of New Jersey"

JERSEY CITY, N.J., December 13, 2018 – They're microscopic, mighty, and play a key role in life all over our planet, but microbes get a bad rap because some of them cause disease. In reality, however, the overwhelming majority are beneficial to us and essential to our survival. Liberty Science Center's newest permanent interactive exhibit *Microbes Rule!* will illuminate just how good microbes are when it opens to the public on December 15.

In fact, *Microbes Rule!* will use art, music and technology to set the record straight about these oft-maligned organisms and how essential they are to the health and well-being of life on our planet. Visitors will find themselves in a new state-of-the-art exhibit that uses an array of interactive stops to highlight just exactly how these tiny organisms shape the world, protect us from pathogens, boost the immune system, help us detoxify, assist in digestion, and keep babies healthy.

"Microbes do important and essential work everywhere – from the deepest seas to the hottest deserts to inside our very own bodies. They shape the world around us and keep us healthy," said Paul Hoffman, LSC President and CEO. "These mighty microbes deserve to be in the spotlight."

Visitors enter the gallery through a giant microscope lens, stepping into a petri-dish-shaped space alive with sound and movement. Hovering overhead is the Microbe Chandelier, which is made up of 3D printed microbes to help illuminate the space while teaching visitors about the different shapes and types of microbes. The chandelier is the only one of its kind and was created in-house using tools and technology found in the Science Center's MakerLab.

Straight ahead, a stunning wall of art features creations by some of the world's foremost agar art makers from the American Society for Microbiology, including synthetic biologist and assistant professor of biomedical engineering at Columbia University Tal Danino. Each of the beautiful art pieces represent interesting and important topics about microbes.

At a nearby touch table, guests are invited to try their hand at agar art by "painting" with microbes using actual lab techniques. Guests can add their microbial masterpieces to the gallery for others guests to see, or take them home via text or email.

While the artwork is a treat for the eyes, *Microbes Rule!* also plays home to a virtual microbial disco that is a treat for the ears. The exhibit highlights the work of MIT Synthetic Biologist David Sun Kong, who has developed a way to utilize the makeu1p of microbes to create music. Visitors can see the technique that Kong uses and sample some of the "microbe beats" themselves.

Because all microbial roads seem to lead to New Jersey, there is a special section of the exhibit dedicated to the "Garden State Hero," *Streptomyces griseus*. In 1943, researchers at Rutgers University discovered that the microbe naturally produces a powerful antibiotic, streptomycin, which became the first effective cure for tuberculosis and has saved millions of lives around the world. The antibiotic was developed at New Jersey-based Merck Pharmaceuticals.

There is currently a bill working its way through the New Jersey legislature that would name *Streptomyces griseus* as New Jersey's Official State Microbe. Liberty Science Center has launched an online petition to garner support for the legislation in hopes of the designation – which would make New Jersey the second state in the nation to have its own official microbe.

To learn more and to sign the petition, please visit lsc.org/microbesrule.

Microbes Rule! is set to open on December 15 at Liberty Science Center. For more information, please visit lsc.org. Initial funding for *Microbes Rule!* has been provided by a generous gift from Joe and Millie Williams.

About Liberty Science Center

Liberty Science Center (LSC.org) is a 300,000-square-foot not-for-profit learning center located in Liberty State Park on the Jersey City bank of the Hudson near the Statue of Liberty. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers and bringing the power, promise, and pure fun of science and technology to learners of all ages, Liberty Science Center houses the largest planetarium in the Western Hemisphere, 12 museum exhibition halls, a live animal collection with 110 species, giant aquariums, a 3D theater, live simulcast surgeries, a tornado-force wind simulator, K-12 classrooms and labs, and teacher-development programs. More than 250,000 students visit the Science Center each year, and tens of thousands more participate in the Center's off-site and online programs. Welcoming more than 750,000 visitors annually, LSC is the largest interactive science center in the NYC-NJ metropolitan area.

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