



EDUCATION PROGRAMS 2026-2027



The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Education Department

The Vanderbilt Museum and Reichert Planetarium offer quality programs that meet the specific needs of K-12 educators in New York. We support New York State learning standards and practices with special emphasis on STEM education and the Culturally Responsive-Sustaining (CR-S) Education Framework.

Programs concentrate on William K. Vanderbilt II's (1878-1944) desire that his marine, natural history, and ethnographic collections promote appreciation and understanding of the marvelous diversity of life, other cultures, and scientific knowledge. Planetarium programming, more specifically, focuses on scientific knowledge and seeks to capture Mr. Vanderbilt's sense of adventure and exploration through state-of-the-art entertainment.

Why your students should visit the Vanderbilt Museum.

- ▼ Most technologically advanced planetarium on Long Island
- ▼ Twenty-two wild-animal dioramas
- ▼ World's largest example of fish taxidermy: 32-foot whale shark
- ▼ The historic mansion is a time capsule of the Great Gatsby era



PLANNING YOUR VISIT

School visits are by appointment only.
Call 631-854-5539 or write
dawn@vanderbiltmuseum.org to schedule a visit.

The safety of students and school staff is our top priority. Please be advised that programs may be subject to change or cancellation due to high wind conditions and inclement weather. Schools will be notified as soon as possible in the case of a museum closure.

FEES

- ▼ One-hour Museum program: \$11
- ▼ Two-hour Museum program: \$15
- ▼ One-hour Planetarium program: \$11
- ▼ 90-minute Planetarium program: \$16

Combination Tickets

- ▼ One-hour Museum program and Planetarium show: \$16
- ▼ Two-hour Museum program and Planetarium show: \$19

We accept payment through BOCES
or a district purchase order.

Complimentary Admissions and Discounts

One complimentary admission will be issued for every 25 paid admissions. The Museum offers a \$1 discount per person for September, January, and February trips.

Schedule

- ▼ One-hour Museum programs:
10:00 am, 11:15 am, and 12:45 pm
- ▼ Two-hour Museum programs:
10:00 am and 12:15 pm
- ▼ Planetarium shows:
10:00 am, 11:15 am, and 12:45 pm

Director of Education

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MUSEUM PROGRAMS

Science Safari

Grades Pre-K - 4 | One Hour

Tour the Memorial Wing and Stoll Wing wildlife dioramas and examine preserved mammal, reptile, and bird specimens.

Sea Search

Grades Pre-K - 5 | One Hour

Tour the Hall of Fishes, learn about William Vanderbilt's expeditions to collect for his museum, and examine preserved invertebrates, fish, and mammal specimens.

Sharks

Grades 1 - 5 | One Hour

Visit the Hall of Fishes and wildlife dioramas to discover the fascinating variety of sharks in the world's oceans, examine preserved shark specimens, and create shark-tooth necklaces.

The Gold Coast

Grades 4 - 12 | One Hour

Tour one of the few remaining Gold Coast estates and discover William Vanderbilt's passion for automobile racing, yachting, and collecting.

The World of Mr. Vanderbilt

Grades 2 - 12 | One Hour

Explore the natural history collections and learn about William Vanderbilt's passion for automobile racing, exploration, and collecting for his museum.



Stoll Wing wildlife diorama.

The Vanderbilt Mummy (Virtual & On-Site)

Grades 5 - 8 | One Hour

Accommodates up to 30 people.

Explore a 21st Dynasty Egyptian mummy, coffin and x-rays, and learn about William Vanderbilt's visits to Egypt.

Young Environmentalists

Grades 3 - 5 | One Hour

Accommodates up to 60 people.

Explore the collections, learn how global warming affects the planet's ecosystems, examine corals, and discover ways to help your community.



William K. Vanderbilt II and fisherman Charlie Thompson labeling marine specimens on board his yacht *Ara*, 1925.

WORKSHOP FOR TEACHERS AND STAFF

Collecting for the Future and Watercolor in the Hall of Fishes

November 3, 2026

9 am - 11 am | \$20

Registration is online only.

To pay with a purchase order,
call 631-854-5539

or write
dawn@vanderbiltmuseum.org.

Scan
to Register
Online



MORE MUSEUM PROGRAMS

Animal Habitats

Grades 1-4 | Two Hours

Tour the Memorial Wing and Stoll Wing, discover the diversity of life from the rainforests to the Sudan grasslands, examine preserved specimens, and create miniature dioramas.



Butterflies and Moths

Grades 2-4 | Two Hours

Students will use costumes to illustrate the characteristics of insects, search for specimens, and design their own lepidoptera.

Egyptian Mummies

Grades 5 - 8 | Two Hours

Students will examine a 21st Dynasty mummy and coffin, and recent X-rays, and create hieroglyph bookmarks.

Identification and Classification

Grades 4 - 8 | Two Hours

Visit the Hall of Fishes, examine preserved marine specimens, explore taxonomy, and create individual watercolor illustrations.

If Walls Could Talk: The Architecture of a Gold Coast Mansion

Grades 4 - 12 | Two Hours

Discover the personality of William Vanderbilt's summer residence, explore the Memorial Wing galleries, and search for architectural elements in the courtyard.

Marine Habitats

Grades 3 - 6 | Two Hours

Visit the Hall of Fishes, explore ocean ecosystems, examine preserved corals, shells, fish, and teeth, and create watercolor illustrations of specimens on display.

The Netherlands to New York

Grades 4 - 12 | Two Hours

Visit the summer residence and collections of William K. Vanderbilt II and discover how the Vanderbilt family contributed to the development of New York State.

Scientific Illustration

Grades 7 - 12 | Two Hours

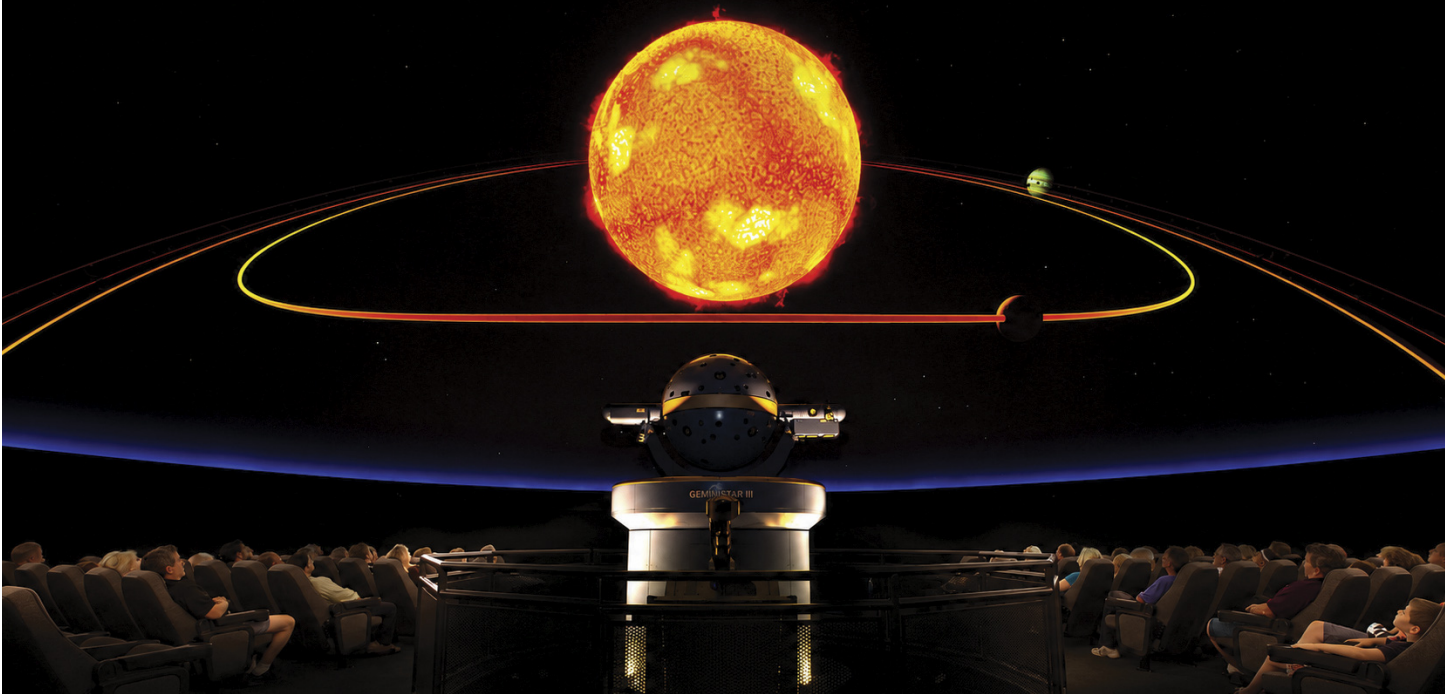
Tour the Hall of Fishes, explore the structure of preserved fish and marine invertebrates, learn about the methods of preservation used in the collections, and create detailed watercolor illustrations.



Hall of Fishes coral reef diorama

LIVE INTERACTIVE PLANETARIUM PROGRAMS

Unique to the Reichert Planetarium, all live lecture programs are presented by an astronomy educator.



WHY TEACHERS CHOOSE THE REICHERT PLANETARIUM

More than a field trip, students observe a realistic night sky, investigate scientific patterns, ask questions of an astronomy educator and experience astronomical scale and motion in ways that cannot be reproduced on a classroom screen.



Let's Look Up!

Pre-K - K | One Hour

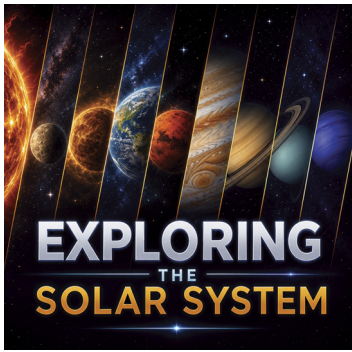
This program encourages young students to observe the world around them while discovering the wonders of the sky. They will explore clouds, storms, rainbows, and the changing colors of the sky, and learn how Earth's rotation creates day and night. Students will also discover how people formed constellations from patterns of stars, identify other points of light in the night sky, observe the Moon's changing phases, and travel through the Solar System to learn about the planets.



Meet the Planets

Grades 1 - 3 | One Hour

Students will explore our Solar System and discover how the Sun influences the planets and drives important processes on Earth, including the water cycle. They will observe the planets orbiting the Sun, learn how Earth's rotation creates day and night, and examine the changing phases of the Moon. From Earth's nighttime side, students will also identify seasonal constellations, distinguish planets from stars, and visit each planet to investigate its unique characteristics.



MORE LIVE INTERACTIVE PLANETARIUM PROGRAMS

Exploring the Solar System

Grades 4 - 6 | One Hour

Beginning with the night sky as seen from Earth, students will identify seasonal constellations and learn how to distinguish planets from stars. They will then “blast off” on an immersive tour of the Solar System, observing the planets in orbit around the Sun and exploring how Earth’s rotation and revolution shape our daily lives. Along the way, students will visit the Sun, each planet, the asteroid belt, and other celestial destinations while examining the unique characteristics of each before returning safely to Earth.



Patterns in Space

Grade 5 | 90 Minutes

Inspired by a collaboration with Brentwood Union Free School District, this 90-minute program is designed for fifth-grade students and aligned with Next Generation Science Standards. A live, interactive sky tour explores gravity, star brightness, seasonal patterns, shadows, and the Sun’s changing path. The program concludes with the fulldome film Earth, Moon & Sun to reinforce these key concepts.



Alien Safari

Grades 5 - 8 | One Hour

This is no ordinary planetarium show—it’s a live, interactive space adventure! As the theater transforms into a spaceship, students become astrobiologists and travel through the Solar System, across the Milky Way, and even at warp speed in search of alien life. Along the way, they will explore what life needs to survive, Earth’s most extreme environments, and promising planets, moons, and distant exoplanets.



Journey Through the Night Sky

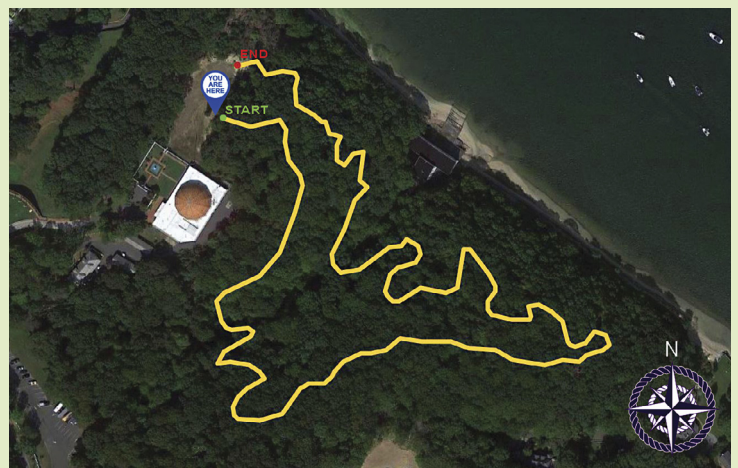
Grades 9 - 12 | One Hour

This live planetarium presentation showcases the star projector at its very best. Begin beneath a brilliant Long Island night sky as we explore seasonal constellations, the Moon, stars, planets, and fascinating deep-sky objects. Then, leave Earth behind for an unforgettable voyage through the vast observable universe.

Solar System Hiking Trail: Free Self-Guided Add-On

Extend your planetarium visit with a walk along our one-mile woodland trail, featuring a scale model of the Solar System from the Sun to Neptune. The trail is available to school groups at no additional cost during September–November and April–June.

Please let the reservationist know when booking if your class would like to participate.



FULLDOME FILM + LIVE STAR TALK

A “fulldome” film is a pre-recorded planetarium program with stunning, immersive visuals projected overhead on our 60-foot dome. Each show is 30 minutes long and, with the addition of a 30-minute live star talk provided by an astronomy educator, becomes a one-hour program.

One World One Sky: Big Bird’s Adventure

Pre-K - Grade 2 | One Hour

Elmo and Big Bird live in the United States, and Hu Hu Zhu lives far away in China. The trio discover they see the same stars at night, and on an imaginary trip to the Moon, they discover how different it is from Earth.

The Little Star that Could

Pre-K - Grade 3 | One Hour

Little Star is an average yellow star in search of planets of his own to protect and warm. Along the way, he meets other stars and learns what makes each type of star special.



Earth, Moon & Sun

Grades 3-6 | One Hour

Coyote, a character from Native American oral traditions, explores characteristics of the Earth, Moon, and Sun—including craters formed by asteroid and meteor impacts, Maria (seas), mountains, and NASA’s historic lunar landings—along with some common misconceptions.

Solar System Odyssey

Grades 4 - 8 | One Hour

Join a veteran spaceflight captain and young tech genius as they search for habitable environments among the planets and moons in our solar system.

Sunstruck

Grades 4 - 8 | One Hour

Sunstruck reveals the wonders of our magnificent Sun and explores how our star has supported life on Earth for billions of years. Travel back in time to witness the birth of the Sun and our solar system. Discover how the Sun made life possible, how it can threaten life as we know it, and how its energy will eventually fade away.

We Are Guardians

Grades 5 - 12 | One Hour

Join us on a journey into, under, and around the many ecosystems across our planet. Discover how each component fits together, and how the health of each part is vital to the health of Planet Earth. Find out how, with the help of satellites and scientific study, we can understand the links between human activities and climate change, and what we can do to work together to improve the health of our shared home.

Exoplanets – Discovering New Worlds

Grades 6 - 12 | One Hour

Explore the thousands of planets discovered beyond our Solar System and the techniques astronomers use to find them. Students will learn how distant planets are detected through tiny stellar wobbles and changes in a star’s brightness, while considering whether planets and moons could support life. The program also examines the search for intelligent civilizations and the possibility that another world may already know we are here.



NEW! American Astronomy

Grades 7 - 12 | One Hour

Celebrate America’s 250th anniversary with an immersive exploration of the people, ideas, and discoveries that shaped our nation’s connection to the sky. From Indigenous sky traditions and colonial navigation to the Apollo Moon landings, gravitational waves, and modern space telescopes, this original Reichert Planetarium production brings American astronomy to life.



We list a selection of shows in this brochure, but we offer many more. We encourage you to visit our website for a complete list of programs, NYS Science Learning Standards, and resources for teachers.



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Can't come to us? We'll bring the universe to your school!

Choose from our Traveling Planetarium, featuring an immersive inflatable dome, or an educator-led classroom presentation filled with stunning visuals, interactive activities, and hands-on astronomy demonstrations.

OUTREACH PROGRAM FEES

TRAVELING PLANETARIUM

Immersive programs inside our inflatable dome

First program: \$400

Additional same-day programs: \$75 each

Capacity: Up to 25 students per program

Schools may schedule up to three programs per day.

INTERACTIVE ASTRONOMY PRESENTATIONS

Educator-led programs featuring stunning visuals and hands-on demonstrations

Classroom Program: \$250

Up to 30 participants

Assembly Program: \$550

Up to 300 participants

