

# FAMILY PROGRAMS: Cultivating Learning & Long-term Members

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# Family Program Series at UC Botanical Garden

- ❖ Formally created as a series in 2012
- ❖ 1-2 programs each month
- ❖ Serves nearly 1,000 participants annually
- ❖ Raises \$5,000 per year (with program fees ranging from Free to \$24)
- ❖ Growth in Family Programming marked parallel growth in Family Level Memberships
- ❖ New donors have emerged through Family Programs participation



# Family Programs: 4 Key Structural Components

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## Key Program Structure #1:

### Parents/Adults participate with child

- ❖ Adults benefit and enjoy educational enrichment
- ❖ Parents can continue the conversation and extend the experience
- ❖ Becomes a shared family bonding experience
- ❖ Creates a desire to explore the garden again together
- ❖ (Requires less staff when parents chaperone/help)



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## Key Program Structure #2:

### “Mini Tour” a part of the Garden

- ❖ Reveals the meaningfulness of your collection
- ❖ Participants discover parts of your garden they didn't know
- ❖ Learn to see the garden in new ways
- ❖ Motivates a return visit



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## Key Program Structure #3:

### Experiential and hands-on

- ❖ Use best practices of inquiry-based learning (guided observations, asking questions, building understanding)
- ❖ Engage as many senses as possible
- ❖ Provide unique opportunities for touching, looking up close, under microscopes, etc.



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## Key Program Structure #4:

### “Make & Take”

Make something based on the program topic to take back home

- ❖ Creates a personal connection
- ❖ Puts the learning into action
- ❖ Fun and creative
- ❖ Can draw in the “Maker” enthusiast
- ❖ Brings the garden (experience) back home
- ❖ Makes the experience more memorable



# Family Programs: Authenticity

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## **Authenticity Factor #1:**

### **Make real plant science at the heart**

- ❖ Genuine learning is exciting
- ❖ Science can be made simple and engaging to cut across age ranges
- ❖ You are providing something not offered elsewhere



# Family Programs: Authenticity

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## Authenticity Factor #2:

### Use your collection

- ❖ Engage with the plants in the collection
- ❖ Derive (almost) all materials from the garden, including the “make it” projects
- ❖ This is why your programs will be uniquely yours





# Family Programs: Themes & Marketing

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## Here's where you sell 'em on it

- ❖ Seasonal highlights (e.g. flowers, leaf color, newts)
  - ❖ Holidays
  - ❖ What kids love (e.g. “dinosaur plants”, “bug-eating plants”, various animals)
  - ❖ “Little Green Thumb” workshops
  - ❖ Themes that connect with Exhibits or other events happening at the garden
  - ❖ Catchy titles (Magical Mini Moss Gardens)
- \*\* But have genuine nature/plant experiences! \*\*





*Example*

## FAMILY PROGRAM: Trees & Birds

Connected to a Botanical Illustration exhibit on the theme of Trees, this program looked at the importance of trees for birds and included a bird walk, a look at real nests and various materials they use based on species, and then a free form make-your-own nest activity using materials collected in the garden.





*Example*

## FAMILY PROGRAM: A Botanical Valentine Tea

The popularity of this program quickly led to it becoming a Garden tradition, and what started as one session of 30, became two sessions subsequent years, and we anticipate needing four sessions next year. This program is a "celebration of edible flowers and fragrant herbs. The program begins with a look some herb and flower samples with our sense, exploring their medicinal qualities on our bodies and the way we feel, a discovery walk through the Herb and Crop Gardens, limited picking of herbs and edible flowers, tea party using harvested items, ending with making valentines from pre-pressed botanicals from the collection.









## *Example*

# FAMILY PROGRAM: Naturally Dyed Spring Eggs

This program begins with looking at some vegetables and the talking about the origins of color from plants (such as indigo that gives blue jeans their color). Children guess what color various vegetable parts will give before going into the classroom to dye eggs. Participants can also make a leaf imprint by using a sturdy leaf and a piece of nylon panty hose to wrap around the egg and hold it in place before dipping into dye bath.





# Effect on return Visitorship/Membership

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- Positive experience creates a desire to explore the garden again as a family
- Reveals the meaningfulness of your collection
- Variety of topics motivates a return to discover more, do/make something new
- Some programs become family traditions
- Membership discount (on programs and visits) becomes more enticing

Private programs  
&  
birthday parties







Discovery  
Station:

Drop-in experience







*Thank you!*