



The Woodlands Children's Museum | 4775 W. Panther Creek Drive, Suite 280 | The Woodlands, Texas 77381
woodlandchildrensmuseum.org

Generating STEM Excitement at The Woodlands Children's Museum

Education coordinator brings back wealth of ideas from NISE Network Partner Meeting

THE WOODLANDS, Texas – March 11, 2019 – When Education Coordinator Carmen Ortega of Conroe plans the next 12 months of science activities at The Woodlands Children's Museum, she'll be drawing upon ideas, information and strategies that she gained at the invitation-only [NISE Network Earth & Space Partner Meeting](#).

NISE, the National Informal STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education Network, encourages STEM learning across the United States by bringing cutting-edge research to museum exhibits and programs, improving the practices of educators and scientists and creating relationships among individuals and organizations.

The Woodlands Children's Museum, at 4775 W. Panther Creek Drive, Suite 280, The Woodlands, Texas 77381, has been a NISE partner since 2016, when the museum was selected to be a recipient of NISE's Earth and Space Toolkit. Since then, Ortega and her team have been using the curriculum and materials in the kit to create a wide range of hands-on learning activities – from [workshops](#) to special events like [Science Palooza](#) – at the museum.

After Ortega submitted a grant application for the network's 2019 toolkit, NISE informed her that not only was the grant application approved, but that she also was invited to attend the 2019 NISE Network Earth & Space Partner Meeting.

NISE, which covers participants' travel expenses, uses these meetings to help partners optimize their usage of the NISE toolkits and increase their knowledge of earth and space science.

The 2019 partner meeting was held Feb. 13-15 at Arizona State University. The museum, through Ortega, was one of 300 partners represented there.

"Carmen has always taken an innovative, energetic approach to our educational programs, and now that she has attended the NISE partner meeting, her enthusiasm level has been through the roof! The insights and ideas she gained at the meeting will help us spark that same sense of excitement in the children who participate in our workshops, educational activities, and community outreach programs," museum Executive Director Angela Colton said.

During the partner meeting, Ortega heard speakers from Arizona State University, the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, among other facilities.

The sessions she attended included "Incorporating Earth and Space Concepts Into Your Summer Camp" and "Engaging Young Children and Families in Earth and Space Content."

"In addition to the knowledge I gained, I really enjoyed meeting other education coordinators," Ortega said. "Most of us have similar challenges. We can work together to make education better across the nation."

Ortega said she's looking forward to working with her team to incorporate what she has learned, along with the resources in the 2019 NISE Toolkit, into educational programs at The Woodlands Children's Museum. "I have a curriculum director and great educators. It's not a one-man show. I want to bring the ideas to my team and implement them at the museum and in the community," Ortega said.

Eventually she hopes to be in a position to take the opportunities NISE has given her and pay them forward. "I would love to be invited back one day and showcase our museum. I would love to apply what I've learned and give it back to other museums," she said.

For more information about workshops and exhibits at The Woodlands Children's Museum, and its many community outreach programs, visit woodlandschildrensmuseum.org or call 281-465-0955.

About The Woodlands Children's Museum

The Woodlands Children's Museum, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, was founded out of a desire to meet the community's proven need for a positive environment where children and their families can learn, play and make special memories throughout the year. At the museum, fun and learning go hand in hand, whether children are creating art, singing along to a musical performance or conducting a science experiment. The museum also has made it a priority to bring children multi-ethnic and multicultural experiences that celebrate cultural and global differences and strengthen common bonds. Programs frequently are delivered in partnership with other nonprofit organizations, always with the goal of making a positive difference in the life of a child. woodlandschildrensmuseum.org.

Attached photo courtesy of The Woodlands Children's Museum.



The Woodlands Children's Museum will present EggTivities Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20.

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