



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Cabrillo National Monument News Release

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National Park Service and AAAS IF/THEN® Ambassadors Partner to Create an Artful Education Program to Inspire Interest in STEM

San Diego, CA – The National Park Service and [AAAS IF/THEN® Ambassadors](#) [Jaye Gardiner](#), [Claire Meaders](#), and [Samantha Wynns](#) have teamed up to create a pilot environmental education program that engages middle-school students from underserved communities to participate in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) projects. *In Their Eyes: Conservation + Comics* incorporates educational techniques, nature exploration, and art to improve student learning and increase science participation.

The Conservation + Comics program follows a three-step model with 1) interactive lessons for the classroom, 2) a field trip to Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego, and 3) a science-themed poster showing. By using tools such as art, games, and comics, the program will connect students to conservation science and encourage them to explore STEM subjects.

"This project, created with my fellow AAAS IF/THEN® Ambassadors and other scientists, has really been a dream collaboration. We wanted to develop a program that would inspire students, especially young girls, to embrace environmental stewardship and develop their own identity as scientists," said Samantha Wynns, a conservation biologist with the National Park Service at Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego. "Through *In Their Eyes: Conservation + Comics*, we want to demonstrate the positive impacts of STEAM education and how it can be fun, creative, and impactful."

On June 3rd, from 4-6:15PM, students will showcase their STEM inspired artwork in a virtual scientific poster showing; the link to attend is available upon request. The AAAS IF/THEN® Ambassadors and local scientists will chaperone the exhibit in a variety of breakout rooms on Zoom. Then, from Friday, June 18th until Friday, August 20th, a temporary exhibit of select scientific posters from the poster showing will be displayed for public viewing in the Visitor Center at Cabrillo National Monument, which will provide high visibility and exposure as the Monument receives about one million visitors per year, with June-August being their busiest season.

"Our partners at Cabrillo and UCSD have been wonderful collaborators throughout this process, and we feel so lucky to be able to pilot this project that allows students to connect science, art, and research," said Charlotte MacIntyre and Grace Leber, teachers at High Tech High School. "We believe that our students should engage in work that matters to the world beyond our classroom walls, and our students have enjoyed learning about what it means to be a scientist, the importance



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of biodiversity, and how we can protect native plants and animals. The experience was truly transformative for our students and staff alike.”

Through the #SheCanChangeTheWorld program, which supports projects led by AAAS IF/THEN® Ambassadors with funding from the [IF/THEN Initiative](#), Samantha Wynns, Jaye Gardiner, cancer biologist and illustrator, and Claire Meaders, Assistant Teaching Professor in the Division of Biology at UC San Diego, share a common goal. They want to help students not only get excited about STEM but also succeed in STEM.

ABOUT CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Cabrillo National Monument is one of over four hundred units in the National Park Service system. The park is located in San Diego, California, perched on the southern end of the Point Loma peninsula more than 400 feet above the shoreline. The park offers unparalleled panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and the urban skyline and mountain ranges from San Diego to Mexico. The park commemorates the voyage of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European to chart the West Coast of what is now the United States. The park includes the Old Point Loma Lighthouse, illuminated in 1855, and 21 military fortifications which protected San Diego harbor in World War I and World War II. The extensive rocky intertidal area along the monument’s western boundary contains one of the best-preserved and well-studied tidepool ecosystems in Southern California. For more information, visit the [park’s website](#).

ABOUT IF/THEN®

IF/THEN® is part of Lyda Hill Philanthropies®’ commitment to fund game-changing advancements in science and nature. IF/THEN® seeks to further advance women in STEM by empowering current innovators and inspiring the next generation of pioneers. Rooted in a firm belief that there is no better time to highlight positive and successful female professional role models, IF/THEN® is designed to activate a culture shift among young girls to open their eyes to STEM careers by: (1) funding and elevating women in STEM as role models, (2) convening cross-sector partners in entertainment, fashion, sports, business and academia to illuminate the importance of STEM everywhere, and (3) inspiring girls with better portrayals of women in STEM through media and learning experiences to pique their interest in STEM careers. To learn more, visit www.ifthenshecan.org or follow IF/THEN® on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

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[The National Park Service \(www.nps.gov\)](http://www.nps.gov)

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