



ASTC Announces 2018 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Award Recipients

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WASHINGTON, D.C., September 28, 2018—The Association of Science-Technology Centers (ASTC), the professional association for science centers and museums, honors three of its member organizations and two ASTC-member professionals during the 2018 ASTC Annual Conference in Hartford, Connecticut, September 29–October 2.

Now in their 14th year, the [Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards](#) are presented annually by ASTC to recognize extraordinary accomplishments in business practice, visitor experience, and leadership in science centers and museums around the globe. Sponsored by Group Delphi, the “Edgie” awards honor the late Roy L. Shafer, a former science center director, ASTC president, organizational coach, and mentor to many institutions and people in the science center and museum field. A 17-member jury of science center and museum professionals from around the world reviewed and selected the award recipients.

The **Leading Edge Award for Business Practice** is bestowed on the **Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC)** in Ohio for its one-of-a-kind *Jurassic Geist* collaboration. This project brought together CMC and Rhinegeist Brewery—a nationally recognized, family-friendly brewery in Cincinnati—to create an engaging museum experience for the community outside of CMC’s museum walls. For *Jurassic Geist*, CMC prominently displayed its *Galeamopus* dinosaur skeleton, a rare 46-foot-long sauropod completely excavated by the CMC, inside of the Rhinegeist Brewery for three months. The collaboration received praise from the community and highlighted the types of amazing things and experiences that await the public inside of museums. *Jurassic Geist* also provided CMC’s donors with an enduring message that their gifts have tangible effects, created a stronger bond between the museum and the greater community, and showcased how world-class museum experiences can happen anywhere. The towering sauropod skeleton is slated to be the centerpiece of CMC’s new dinosaur gallery opening in November 2018.

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The **Philippine Science Centrum (PSC)** in Marikina City, Metro Manila, Philippines, received the **Leading Edge Award for Visitor Experience (small institution)**, for its Science Works! program. Managed by the Philippine Foundation for Science and Technology, PSC and its traveling exhibits serve almost half a million Filipinos from all over the country. Most recently, PSC's Science Works! program served as an educational intervention for 205,000 students living in geographically isolated depressed areas, who were victims of the five-month long Battle of Marawi (Marawi Siege), an armed conflict in Marawi, Lanao del Sur in Mindanao—considered the longest urban battle in the modern history of the Philippines. During this time, Science Works! created an informal learning environment focused on equity, opportunity, diversity, inclusion, and cooperative learning.

The Leading Edge Award for **Visitor Experience (large institution)** went to the **Ontario Science Centre** in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, honoring its Mental Health: The Science of Anxiety program. Mental Health: The Science of Anxiety is a collection of 45-minute interactive presentations for middle school or secondary students, delivered onsite or via videoconference. The program aims to reduce stigma about mental health issues by framing anxiety as a normal part of life. The storyline of the program takes a neurobiological perspective on anxiety. Ontario Science Centre educators explain what is happening in the brain when a person feels anxious, and how these brain changes cause the physical symptoms of stress. The educators then measure some of these bodily changes in student volunteers and provide students with evidence-based coping strategies to help manage anxiety.

The Leading Edge Award for **Leadership in the Field (non-CEO)** was bestowed on **Cynthia Sharpe**, Principal of Cultural Attractions & Research for Thinkwell Group in Los Angeles, California. In 2017 Sharpe co-founded Harriet B's Daughters, a group created to mentor the next generation of female-themed entertainment leadership and mindfully expand representation, inclusion, and diversity within guest experiences and creative works. She is also a leader and mentor at Thinkwell Group, one of the world's leading experiential design and production agencies. In her role at Thinkwell, Sharpe is responsible for bringing museum and education perspectives and disciplines to the organization's projects. She also works closely with the creative team to ensure the vision of an exhibit or institution stays true to the content and story, overseeing evaluation, and advocating for the museum and its visitor in all phases of design.

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Michelle Hall, CEO of the Institute for Science Education New Mexico in Los Alamos, received the **Leading Edge Award for Leadership in the Field (CEO)**. Taking inspiration from England's "Science Cafés" for adults that were popular in the 1990s, Hall founded a Teen Science Café Network. The network is a series of free, fun, out-of-school events that enable teenagers to socialize over food while talking with local scientists and engineers about STEM topics (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). Hall's creative and visionary leadership of the Teen Science Café Network has inspired informal science educators across the country to join in a vibrant community of practice. Since its formation in 2012, the network has established 108 local teen science café programs in 45 states, engaging tens of thousands of high school teenagers. The program has also expanded internationally, with sites in Canada, England, Singapore, and Jamaica.

Serving on this year's jury were Jonah Cohen (the jury's chair), from McWane Science Center in Birmingham, Alabama; Adrienne Barnett from Thinkery in Austin, Texas; Toph Bryant from Kentucky Science Center in Louisville; Irena Cieślińska from Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw, Poland; Megan Dempsey from Connecticut Science Center in Hartford; Andrea Durham from Science World British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada; Pody Gay from Museum of Discovery in Little Rock, Arkansas; Eric Godoy from Denver Museum of Nature & Science in Colorado; Tamara Grybko from Explora in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Clara Chien Hui Lim from Science Centre Singapore; Ali Jackson from Sciencenter in Ithaca, New York; Ann Metzger from Carnegie Science Center in Pittsburgh; Jeff Rosenblatt from Science City at Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri; Meghan Schiedel from Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum in Reno; Janella Watson from Providence Children's Museum in Rhode Island; Harry White, from HWConsult in Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom; and Tifferney White from Discovery Place in Charlotte, North Carolina.

ASTC thanks the jury for their service and Group Delphi for sponsoring the award.

Nominations for 2019 Roy L. Shafer Leading Edge Awards will be accepted in Spring 2019.

About ASTC

Founded in 1973, ASTC now represents nearly 700 organizational members that welcome more than 120 million people each year in more than 50 countries around the world. ASTC members include not only science centers and museums, but also nature centers, aquariums, planetariums, zoos, botanical gardens, and natural history and children's museums, as well as companies, consultants, and other organizations that share an interest in informal science education. Through strategic alliances and global partnerships, ASTC strives to increase awareness of the valuable contributions its members make to their communities and the field of informal STEM learning. www.astc.org