



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals
Announces Free Guided Group Tours

Hillsboro, Oregon, August 3, 2021 – Aurore Giguët, Executive Director of the Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals, announced today that the Rice Museum of Rocks and Minerals will offer **free** group tours (guided experiences) throughout August and September. This initiative provides the same educational experience as the Museum's typical school tour and is funded by a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation.

Priority booking will be given to students enrolled in Title 1 schools - federally subsidized schools with a high percentage of low-income students - and their families, as well as those who have been negatively impacted by COVID 19. This program is part of the Rice Museum's commitment to make earth science education more accessible to the residents of the communities the Museum serves.

The Rice Museum has been bringing informal earth science experiences to the Portland metropolitan area and the surrounding region since 1997. Part of its current strategic plan includes celebrating the splendor of the Earth through growth in its public programs.

Giguët said, "We believe everyone, regardless of income, deserves to experience the joy and inspiration that visiting a museum can offer. As our region continues to recover from the pandemic, this program will allow families to engage in safe, healthy, and enriching activities."

The Rice also participates in two national access programs, **Museums for All** and **Blue Star Museums**. The Museums for All initiative supports those receiving food assistance (SNAP) benefits by visiting the Rice Museum for a reduced fee of \$3.00 per person, up to four people, with a SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. The Blue Star Museums program runs Armed Forces Day—Saturday, May 15, 2021, thru Labor Day—Monday, September 6, 2021. Active-duty military personnel, including the National Guard and Reserves, and their families receive free admission to the Museum with the presentation of a valid military id.

The Museum seeks funding to expand the free tour program and extend Blue Star benefits beyond the summer months.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Free limited capacity group tours hit all of the same Next Generation Science Standards that the Museum's typical school tours fulfill and are led by the same enthusiastic group of

educators. Content covered is appropriate for grades 1-6. **Advanced registration is required:** <https://ricenorthwestmuseum.org/guided-experience-tours/>

ABOUT THE MUSEUM

Housing a world-class collection of rocks and minerals, the Rice Museum is recognized as the finest in the Pacific Northwest and one of the best in the nation. Its educational programs include organized school field trips and ongoing educational outreach throughout the community at large. The Museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its unique architectural style and its use of natural stone and extraordinary native Oregon woodwork throughout the building. The Rice Museum is a Smithsonian Affiliate; the Affiliation serves as an endorsement to the quality of a museum's facilities, the training and professionalism of its staff, and its mission to educate the public. More information about the Smithsonian Affiliations program and Affiliate activity is available at www.affiliations.si.edu. For more information about the Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals, call (503) 647-2418 or visit www.ricenorthwestmuseum.org.

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