

Dinosphere: Now You're In Their World

What is Dinosphere?

The \$25 million gallery, *Dinosphere*®: *Now You're in Their World*, is a one-of-a-kind, immersive juvenile and family dinosaur experience for all ages. It is one of the largest displays of real juvenile and family dinosaur fossils in the United States. The gallery features a combination of education-oriented and science-focused learning.



When did Dinosphere open?

Dinosphere opened on June 11, 2004. The first phase of *Dinosphere*, the Paleo Prep Lab, opened in the fall of 2001. In the Paleo Prep Lab, children begin their search for dinosaur clues through in-depth educational programs that allow them to observe professional preparators as they prepare 65-million-year-old dinosaur fossils for display in *Dinosphere*. Opportunities for questions and answers are provided periodically.

What is a visit to Dinosphere like?

Visitors to *Dinosphere* are transported back in time through a multisensory, immersive environment. Along the way, families can stop to experiment and explore at interactive learning stations as they search for clues about dinosaurs and how they lived and died. Several plants and animals that lived with the dinosaurs are used in these programs and displays to present a more accurate depiction of the Cretaceous period.

What specimens are featured in Dinosphere?

The centerpiece of *Dinosphere* is Bucky, a teenage *Tyrannosaurus rex*—the first *T. rex* found with a wishbone! Other specimens include:

- *Dracorex hogwartsia*, a one-of-a-kind dragon-like dinosaur specimen named for the school in J.K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter book series.
- A nearly complete *Gorgosaurus* skeleton. A cousin of the *T. rex*, this *Gorgosaurus* had a rare brain tumor that fossilized inside the skull.
- Baby Louie, a mostly articulated baby dinosaur found curled up in its nest. Louie was featured on the cover of National Geographic.
- Kelsey, a *Triceratops*, and powerful foe of the *T. rex*.
- A rare *Prenoceratops*, a small plant-eating dinosaur with a parrot-like beak.
- *Maiasaura*, a duckbill dinosaur that lived in large herds and cared for its babies.
- A Hypacrosaur family, including an adult, a juvenile, and two infants.

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Why did The Children's Museum create Dinosphere?

National test results show that only 3 percent of fourth graders have advanced science proficiency, while 33 percent are now below the basic level. By introducing children to the world of dinosaurs, The Children's Museum also compels children to explore the world of science. To complement the exhibit, the museum developed units of study for educators to use in the classroom, as well as other professional development opportunities and research workshops.

Did The Children's Museum make Dinosphere scientifically accurate?

The museum assembled an International Paleontology Advisory Board of experts in paleontology, informal learning, science education, and paleo art to advise museum staff throughout the planning, designing, and installation of the gallery. Advisors continue to research museum specimens and publish their findings. Advisory board members include:

- Robert Bakker, Ph.D., Boulder, Colorado, one of the most noteworthy dinosaur paleontologists in the U.S.
- Drs. Phil Currie and Eva Koppelhus, Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology in Alberta, Canada, which boasts one of the world's largest collections of paleontological materials.
- John Falk and Lynn Dierking, renowned experts on learning research and development in museum settings.
- John Lanzendorf, Chicago, Illinois, world-renowned paleo-art collector and aficionado.

- Pete and Neal Larson, founders of the Black Hills Institute of Geologic Research, Hill City, South Dakota. Pete Larson was on the team that discovered the *T. rex* named "Sue," now on display at the Chicago Field Museum.
- Michael Skrepnick, world-famous artist whose paintings and drawings of dinosaurs have illustrated articles, books, and presentations by top paleontologists.
- Dong Zhiming, renowned Chinese paleontologist. Dr. Zhiming has discovered and described more species of dinosaurs than any other living paleontologist.

How was Dinosphere funded?

Dinosphere was funded through a \$15 million gift from Lilly Endowment, a \$3 million pledge from the Scott A. Jones Foundation, \$4 million from the Enid Goodrich Educational Initiatives Fund of The Children's Museum, and \$1 million from Polly Horton Hix. Remaining funds for the exhibit came from The Children's Museum and other international, national, and local contributors.

What is Dragons Unearthed?

Dragons Unearthed is the current theme for The Mann Properties Gallery featuring the Lanzendorf Collection of Dinosaur Imagery on Level 2 of *Dinosphere*. In this art gallery, visitors can explore the connection between dinosaurs and dragons while creating their own works of art and viewing original paintings and sculptures of dinosaurs as well as Chinese art and artifacts. A highlight of the gallery is *Dracorex hogwartsia*, a recent dinosaur find with features that resemble dragons of ancient myth.