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## **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Butterfly Ball Raises Record \$2.3 Million for Science Education**

*Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum's signature gala celebrates science and nature*

**CHICAGO** – (May 21, 2018) – The Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum's 20<sup>th</sup> annual Butterfly Ball on May 4 was a tremendous success, raising more than \$2.3 million in support of the Nature Museum's critical science education initiatives that impact thousands of Chicago students and teachers. More than 650 guests attended this record-setting Butterfly Ball.

"Our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala was met with an outpouring of support for nature and science initiatives at a level we have never seen before. We are so incredibly grateful for to the corporate, civic, educational, and philanthropic leaders who demonstrated their strong commitment to our work," said Deborah Lahey, Nature Museum President and CEO. "Their support leads to transformative programs for children, provides support for teachers, and makes science come alive in Chicago's schools. With this support, we have proudly raised over \$32 million in our 20 years of the Butterfly Ball"

During the cocktail hour guests explored the Nature Museum and experienced the ways the institution engages the community through education initiatives, conservation work, citizen science projects, and immersive exhibits. Highlights included meeting endangered Blanding's turtles and touring the new exhibits *Birds of Paradise: Amazing Avian Evolution* and the self-curated live bird showcase, *The Bird House*.

The distinguished Butterfly Ball co-chairs were Catherine and Patrick Dowd, Holly and Matt Maloney, and Trish Rooney. Anne Thompson, NBC News Chief Environmental Correspondent, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the fifth consecutive year.

The Nature Museum honored Annie and Greg Jones, Edgewater Funds, with its fifth annual Leadership in Science and Education Award. They have generously supported the Museum personally, and by securing corporate and philanthropic dollars from others. Annie shared a heartfelt story about her son, Hunter, who gave her his birthday money from his grandmother – \$8 – as she left for the Ball and asked her to give it in support of the Nature Museum which he loves so much. The Jones family shares the Museum's passion for education programs, particularly through reaching underserved students in Chicago with critical science education.

Judy Istock and Cathy Osborn were also honored for their support of the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum and the Butterfly Ball over the last 20 years. They were recognized with the 2018 Butterfly Award, which celebrated their support and advocacy since the founding of the Nature Museum.

Auctioneer Jonathan Kraft and Lahey led the paddle raise, which supported the Nature Museum's science education initiatives in every ward in the city of Chicago.

A three-course dinner was provided by Calihan Catering and was capped with a beautiful butterfly garden dessert designed specially to commemorate Butterfly Ball 20. The event's bold, modern look and décor were provided by The Flower Firm.

Following dinner, guests danced to the music of the band *Maggie Speaks*.

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**About the Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum**

The Chicago Academy of Sciences / Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum serves as an urban gateway to nature and science. Located in an eco-friendly building amidst abundant wildlife and nature in Lincoln Park, interactive exhibitions allow visitors of all ages to connect with regional wildlife and public programs that inspire green living and sustainability. With a history that spans over 160 years, the Chicago Academy of Sciences' conservation efforts study, explore and protect urban wildlife and the unique natural history of the Great Lakes region. Today, collaborative conservation programs include citizen science initiatives and habitat restoration. Our education department provides more hours of hands-on teaching inside the Nature Museum - and in schools throughout the city – than any Museum in Chicago. For more information, visit [naturemuseum.org](http://naturemuseum.org) or call 773-755-5100.