MEDIA CONTACT:

Mary Catherine Frantz
510-336-7338
pr@chabotspace.org  **Chabot Space & Science Center and Hillcrest School in Oakland Partner to Embed Science Learning in a Museum Setting

Students become citizen scientists through hands-on learning in a year-long pilot program that expands STEM education beyond the classroom during school hours**
Oakland, CA, May 1, 2019 – In an innovative new public-private collaboration, Chabot Space & Science Center is partnering with Hillcrest Middle School in Oakland to provide one day a week on-site science education for more than 100 students for the 2018-2019 school year in a program entitled Chabot Satellite Academy.

Hillcrest’s entire middle school student body is spending Tuesdays at Chabot Space & Science Center and school faculty and Chabot staff are jointly creating deep and meaningful curricula that tap the center’s exhibits, expertise and surroundings to inspire students to learn, interact and communicate in deeper ways.

“We think this is the only program of its kind in the country, where a middle school is actually embedded in a science museum for 20 percent of its academic week,” said Chabot Executive Director, Adam Tobin, “This gives the students unprecedented access to science, scientists and educators at a level not often available in public schools. It empowers our staff to more deeply explore how we can better serve the community as an educational resource.”

This spring semester, students are conducting a citizen science research projects focused on finding solutions to one of four concerns in local and global communities: waste/litter, climate change, human health and income equality. The semester culminates with student presentations and demos at the science center on May 7, 2019.

“The test is not just can students can recite back what they have learned, but can they interpret and teach what they have learned to other students? We are creating the same kind of ‘cascading mentorship’ that has been found in science practice for generations but is somehow missing in a school setting. It’s very exciting and very innovative and we can’t wait to see what these young scientists come up with,” Tobin said.

“I see this as a transformative learning design where students participate in relevant and rigorous science education in a quality learning landscape. The fall and spring sessions are designed to foster collaboration, critical literacy, and problem solving. These 102 Hillcrest students will have the opportunity to learn about and develop solutions for complex problems that our local and global community face. Equally important is that their feedback, learning, and observations will inform and guide our teachers' instructional decisions,” Maria McCormick, Principal of Hillcrest School, part of Oakland Unified School District, said.

**About Chabot Satellite Academy**

The Chabot Satellite Academy is an innovative collaboration between Chabot Space & Science Center and Hillcrest School to deepen science learning for middle school students through repeated access and exposure to museum-quality resources and surrounding parks.

The pilot program began in October 2018, over 100 sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students began using Chabot as their satellite learning site once a week, for a total of twenty visits throughout the school year. All programs will integrate the California State-adopted Next Generation Science Standards, with an emphasis on the Science and Engineering Practices. In total, the interdisciplinary curriculum of the Academy incorporates more than science content and includes connections to the history of science, mathematical applications, writing in the content area, art and physical education.

In the Fall semester, students used the exhibits at Chabot to explore science communication and presentation. The Fall semester culminated in the fabrication and presentation of student exhibits that were put through the rigors of a test audience of elementary school students.

The Chabot Satellite Academy gives students the opportunity to deeply experience museum exhibits and programs and understand many behind-the-scenes aspects of museums. Guest speakers bring another important resource to help students understand how scientists observe and understand the world. The neighboring parks, including Redwood Regional Park and Joaquin Miller Park, provide additional opportunities for hikes and other outdoor exploration.

The curriculum and teaching are designed and delivered collaboratively by Chabot staff and Hillcrest teachers.

“This pilot program with Hillcrest Middle School is only the beginning of the kind of in-depth partnership and programming that Chabot Space and Science Center can initiate with schools in the Oakland Unified School District. We are actively speaking with principals of public schools across Oakland about this program for next year and see it as a key partnership for STEM education in our community,” said Tobin.

**About Chabot Space & Science Center**

Chabot Space & Science Center is a non-profit institution and community resource located on 13 trail-laced acres in Redwood Regional Park in Oakland amid the largest stand of coastal redwoods in the East Bay. Chabot features a 241-seat full dome planetarium, interactive and hands-on exhibits, space artifacts, a giant screen theater, a Challenger Learning Center, and the only research-level telescopes regularly available to the public for weekly live viewing in the Western United States.

Chabot’s mission is to inspire and educate learners of all ages about the Universe and Planet Earth.

Chabot Space & Science Center is open Wed.-Sun. 10 am-5 pm with First Fridays the first Friday of every month 5-9 pm. Admission is Adults: $18 • children 3-12 $14 (under 3 free) • Students/Seniors $15 • Memberships available.

###