



MONTREAL SCIENCE CENTRE

Some of the fun at the Eureka Festival at the Montreal Science Centre.

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Science fair of fun is yours to discover

FREE AND FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Wander, pick an area of interest and inquire

KATHRYN GREENAWAY
THE GAZETTE

"It's free, family-friendly and outdoors."

Actor Marc-André Coallier was talking about the Eureka Festival during a gathering Wednesday at the Montreal Science Centre.

Coallier is the spokesman for the free science fair, which is back June 12-14 for a third edition with more than 100 science-related activities set up along the promenade in front of the Montreal Science Centre on King Edward Pier at the bottom of St. Laurent Blvd.

Coallier strode into the conference room wearing hi-tech stilts designed by Powerstrider. Walking, jumping and running while wearing the gizmos is called "powerblocking." Children as young as 8 can learn how to powerblock at the festival next weekend.

"They might look familiar to you," Coallier said of his leg gear. "400 children wore them during the closing ceremonies at the Beijing Olympics."

The festival, which won the 2008 Innovation-Relève prize presented by the Quebec Network of Innovative Businesses, attracted 40,000 visitors last year.

"It's not just blah, blah," Coallier said. "There's stuff happening. It's a festival where we get answers to questions we have about the life we live."

Opening night features members of the Ligue nationale d'improvisation facing off with well-known science presenters, at 8 p.m., followed by stargazing through telescopes,

helped along by representatives from the Montreal Planetarium. The event marks the International Year of Astronomy.

One of the many new elements this year is an installation by lauded designer Mélissa Mongiat. Musical notes are triggered when visitors pass under a series of arches, with the combined notes creating a "fanfare." The more people passing under the arches at the same time, the more complex the fanfare becomes.

Pick an area or areas of interest – aerospace, nutrition, arts, science and technology, chemistry, physics, the environment, engineering, humanities, technological innovations, multidisciplinary science, health, information and communications technology – then wander, inquire, discover.

Onstage entertainment includes a trio of exciting science presentations: Ariel Fenster uses humour to explain the science of food; Yvon Fortin reenacts a 400-year-old science experiment, and Yannick Bergeron produces explosive chemical reactions. Check the schedule onsite for showtimes.

The Eureka Festival takes place at the Old Port at the bottom of St. Laurent Blvd. on June 12 from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., with official opening events running from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., and June 13 and 14, from 11 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. For schedule details, www.festivaleureka.ca.

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