

**CONTACT:**

Lee Ann Brownlee, Children's Science Center  
703-344-4935

Jill McNabb, Children's Science Center  
[info@TheChildrensScienceCenter.org](mailto:info@TheChildrensScienceCenter.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The Children's Science Center Launches OPERATION: LADYBUG**

*Calling All Children and Families to Collect Important Data This Summer as Citizen Scientists*

**Herndon, VA** – Calling all young scientists! If you're looking for some fun backyard science this summer, the Children's Science Center has the perfect project for the whole family: **Operation: Ladybug**. Operation: Ladybug is a collaborative effort between Cornell University's *Lost Ladybug Project* and the Children's Science Center to gather data for entomologists to identify the various species of ladybugs nationwide. According to Cornell University, the ladybug species distribution across North America is changing: while some native ladybugs are becoming rare in some areas, other regions are seeing more ladybugs than in the past. Cornell entomologists report, "This is happening very quickly and we don't know how, or why, or what impact it will have on ladybug diversity or the role that ladybugs play in keeping plant-feeding insect populations low."

**Ready, Set, Click!** Here is how your young scientists can help! It's as simple as 1-2-3.

- 1) **Register!** – Sign up as a participant at [www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org/Ladybug](http://www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org/Ladybug)
- 2) **Locate Ladybugs** – find ladybugs that live in your backyard, parks or trails
- 3) **Click and Send!** – Take a photograph of the little "ladies" you find and submit them to the Cornell University study

While the entomologists at Cornell University are doing their own research, your children can help identify different species and contribute to this nationwide study. Cornell is most interested in the rare species – such as the nine-spotted ladybugs, but any pictures will help with the project. Cornell entomologists encourage Operation: Ladybug participants to keep a *Ladybug Log* telling where and how they collected the ladybugs, for what duration, and the time, date, weather, and habitat. Remember, even zero-counts are useful data! Your children will truly be citizen scientists as they learn more about ladybugs and their environment.

Everyone, including our citizen scientists, will be invited to the Operation: Ladybug Finale, a fun, family event, on August 4. All of our citizen scientists will earn a certificate of participation.

For more information on the Children's Science Center's Operation: Ladybug and how to send in your submissions, please visit: [www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org/Ladybug](http://www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org/Ladybug).

### **About The Children's Science Center:**

The Children's Science Center is a hands-on interactive hands-on museum being planned for Northern Virginia. We envision a facility of over 40,000 square feet that will offer hands-on exhibits, activities and programs focusing on science, technology, engineering and math. We are working to create a regional resource where families can explore, create and be inspired.

Today, our Museum Without Walls Program brings hands-on science activities to thousands of children in our area, allowing us to fulfill our mission before our doors open, to instill a love of learning STEM in all children by providing unique opportunities to explore, create, and be inspired. In 2012, the Museum Without Walls program served 14,500 visitors. The Children's Science Center is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization. Learn more at:

Web: [www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org](http://www.TheChildrensScienceCenter.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ChildrensScienceCenter](https://www.facebook.com/ChildrensScienceCenter)

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