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Contact: Emily Moore | 505-382-8721
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Tiguex Park Transformed Into Unique Outdoor Classroom

Explora and PRD team up on new installations to promote STEAM concepts and connect with nearby museums

ALBUQUERQUE – A new series of permanent outdoor exhibits featuring science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) is coming to Tiguex Park thanks to a partnership between Explora Science Center and Children’s Museum of Albuquerque (Explora) and the Parks & Recreation Department (PRD).

The nine new educational installations will promote exploration of shapes, numbers, patterns, and geometry. Besides highlighting fundamental scientific principles, these features will link the park to two directly adjacent science museums, Explora and the New Mexico Museum of Natural History. The exhibits encourage collaboration with parents, caregivers and other children while illuminating the rich history of Tiguex Park and the region. The project elevates the park’s function as an outdoor classroom, promotes excitement around numbers and scientific inquiry, and encourages immersion in the natural world. The installations also emphasize local geography, culture, and materials.

“Not all classrooms have four walls,” said **PRD Director Dave Simon**. “Tiguex will be unique in New Mexico, setting a new standard. A visit to this park will spark more curiosity and learning.”

The varied new installations include a reflection tower, sculptural structures that illustrate the sky, a model of the Sandia Mountains, two soundstones, wind turbines, a scale model of the solar system, an illustration of fractals (complex geometric shapes found in nature), and others. Hands-on activities available on Explora’s website and in the adjacent museums support the exhibits. This project will create a new experience for visitors at Tiguex Park alongside its beloved green spaces; sports, performance, and community gathering sites; and other existing amenities.

“We were able to base this exhibition on community listening sessions and neighborhood families’ interest in spending more time outside, off-screens, and engaged in multi-generational learning,” said **Explora’s Co-Executive Director Joe Hastings**. “We’re excited for everyone to visit soon!”

PRD and Explora launched the *Family Science in Tiguex Park* project to increase free STEAM learning opportunities integrated into neighborhoods. After PRD initially proposed using the park to teach STEAM concepts in 2019, Explora held listening sessions that confirmed the community’s interest in outdoor experiences that could increase science learning. The project cost about \$500,000. Explora won a \$250,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and PRD matched the grant amount. Explora staff designed the exhibits in partnership with PRD.

“There’s so much of the Explora environment that can be translated to the outdoor environment,” said **Elizabeth Forster, of the Rio Grande Down Syndrome Network**. “I particularly love anything that encourages creative problem solving and multiple ability entry points.”

Crews started installing exhibits on Monday, August 11, 2025. Work is expected to be completed by the end of September.

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About CABQ Parks & Recreation: *The Parks & Recreation Department maintains nearly 300 parks, 150 miles of multi-use trails, more than 30,000 acres of Major Public Open Space, four municipal golf courses, 12 pools, and numerous recreation facilities throughout Albuquerque, including Balloon Fiesta Park. Hundreds of employees across six divisions within the Department take pride in ensuring Albuquerque residents have great facilities and programs that support quality-of-life, foster a healthy community, and strengthen the local economy.*

About Explora Science Center and Children’s Museum of Albuquerque: *Explora is a science center and children’s museum in Albuquerque with a mission of contributing to family and community prosperity by creating accessible opportunities for inspirational technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). Founded in 1995, Explora serves thousands of people of all backgrounds each year and is dedicated to improving New Mexico’s educational and economic outcomes. Please visit www.explora.us/ for more information.*