

Grow Your Love of Nature at the Youth Science Institute

At the Youth Science Institute (YSI), we're helping to turn kids into budding scientists and nature enthusiasts. Every wildflower patch is a habitat, every rock is a geology lesson, every leaf a botany adventure, and every creek a living ecosystem to explore. We're not just teaching science—we're igniting a passion for learning and nature in children, families, and communities.



Nature Centers

YSI operates three Science and Nature Centers in two beautiful Santa Clara County Parks and a historically significant and scenically stunning San Jose City Park.

Visit our Nature Centers to discover local ecosystems first-hand with over 70 animal ambassadors and interactive exhibits. Whether with your kids or grandkids, out with hiking friends, or a community group, every Nature Center visit sparks curiosity and fosters an appreciation for the natural world.



VASONA

Vasona Lake County Park
333 Blossom Hill Rd
Los Gatos, CA 95032



SANBORN

Sanborn County Park
16055 Sanborn Rd
Saratoga, CA 95070



ALUM ROCK

Alum Rock Park
15350 Penitencia Creek Rd
San Jose, CA 95127



Plan Your Visit! See ysi-ca.org for current hours and events

YSI Needs Nature to Thrive

Thank you to our County and City partners for the beautiful parks we call home!





Community Events

Discover the wonders of nature through YSI's free weekend events for families. Our offerings include engaging storytimes, guided nature walks, wildlife watching, and hands-on outdoor activities that help our community members learn while having fun in nature.

YSI also participates in local events like the Vasona Fantasy of Lights, the Migration Festival, Park Clean-Ups, and many more! Explore our events page to see what's in store.



Science Programs

Encourage enthusiasm for science with your school or community group with YSI's 10 engaging programs, featuring hands-on experiments, live animal encounters, and immersive nature experiences that bring classroom lessons to life!

We offer field trips to our Nature Centers, in-school programming, and even birthday parties. If there are people who are excited about science, we have a team of dedicated instructors ready to spark their curiosity and show them how amazing nature truly is.



Featured Programs



Animals Adaptations



Five Senses Nature Walk



Climate Change: Understanding the Challenge



Life of an Ohlone



Outdoor Summer Camps

YSI science camps immerse children in the wonders of the natural world through outdoor adventures, hands-on activities, and exciting encounters with local wildlife and habitats. From interactive science games to live animal ambassadors, every day fosters curiosity, builds social skills, and inspires a lasting connection to the environment.

Our more than 20 unique camps are held yearly in beautiful Vasona Lake County Park, and are lead by exceptional staff who are passionate about science education, getting out in nature, being safe, and having fun!



Favorite Camps



Groovy Gardening



Chemistry and Physics



Bike and Hike



Something's Fishy



Get Involved to Help YSI Grow

Join us in empowering the next generation of curious minds, outdoor adventurers, and environmental stewards!

Visit
Engage

Partner
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Volunteer
Donate



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