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BIOBUS COMES HOME TO URBANA

BioBus Brings Science to Life Partnering with UIUC Physicists

New York, NEW YORK (October 8, 2010) – The BioBus, a state-of-the-art microscope laboratory on wheels, is visiting Urbana for four days as part of its third annual national tour. Led by Urbana native Dr. Ben Dubin-Thaler, the BioBus' crew of research scientists set out from New York City last week, fresh from the World Maker Faire -- a public event with thousands of attendees where they earned praise from fair organizers and Scientific American alike.

While in Urbana, Dr. Ben will bring his "magic school bus" to two schools and the Orpheum Children Science Museum before departing for a week in residence at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and concluding the trip on the National Mall in D.C. as part of the USA Science and Engineering Festival. Dr. Ben's parents (current Urbana residents) are sponsoring a BioBus visit to Leal Elementary School, while the UIUC Center for the Physics of Living Cells is sponsoring school visits as well as a public event hosted by the Orpheum Children's Science Museum on Sunday, Oct. 10.

At the Orpheum on Sunday, the BioBus will team up with the UIUC Physics Van, the outreach vehicle of the UIUC Physics Department. The success of the Physics Van in generating enthusiasm about science was part of what inspired Dr. Ben to start the BioBus project three years ago. From 1 to 5 PM, the public will explore basic physics and living cells through demonstrations and hands-on experiments.

Graduate students from the Center for the Physics of Living Cells (CPLC), a center in the UIUC Physics Department dedicated to painting the "ultimate-resolution portrait of the living cell" using both biological and physical techniques, will also be teaching on the bus.

Professor Taekjip Ha, CPLC Co-Director, is very excited to bring the BioBus back to Urbana, "because its mission to have practicing scientists teach the public about cellular biology using the latest physical techniques dovetails perfectly with our Center's mission." Dr. Ben recently highlighted this element of the BioBus mission, explaining that the "BioBus gives students a chance to work on actual science - ... side-by-side with actual scientists," in an opinion published last week by [NBC News](#). Professor Jasna Brujic of New York University agrees, saying, "the BioBus is the beginning of a revolution in science education...Students of all ages jump off the bus actually wondering how things work. That curiosity is what it's all about!" Businesses such as Farber Specialty Vehicles of Columbus, also support the BioBus mission, renovating the BioBus interior free of charge shortly after last year's Urbana visit.

Another exciting new addition to the BioBus this year is a green roof -- a one-of-a-kind experimental garden fixed to the back roof of the bus. The roof fits with the mission of the BioBus to provide a “green” education. The 1974 bus engine runs on recycled restaurant vegetable oil, while solar panels and a wind turbine power the lab.

Over the last two years, the BioBus has visited 100 schools and has taught over 18,000 students and members of the public. The BioBus primarily offers formal lessons. The bus also attends community events and festivals, bringing informal science exploration opportunities for all ages.

Dr. Dubin-Thaler received his Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Columbia University. Upon graduation, Dr. Dubin-Thaler contemplated several high-profile teaching and research positions but instead chose to found the BioBus. He saw the bus as a genuine opportunity to energize the scientific community by creating a curriculum that would engage students and help to usher in a new generation of scientists.

BioBus is operated by Cell Motion Laboratories, Inc., a 501(c)(3) educational non-profit corporation. The bus and its staff of scientists are supported by grants from foundations and corporations and by individual donations. For more information, please visit <http://www.biobus.org>.



About Dr. Ben Dubin-Thaler: Dr. Dubin-Thaler received his Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from Columbia University, where he earned numerous awards and honors for both his teaching and research. He continues to engage in research through collaboration with research laboratories throughout the United States and throughout the world.