



THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

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2017-18



This rendering of the Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital shows the east-facing entrance. The building is expected to be completed in 2020.

University of Utah Receives \$47.5 Million Gift from Craig H. Neilsen Foundation for New State-of-the-Art Rehabilitation Hospital

On November 1, the University of Utah announced that the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation is donating \$47.5 million for a new, state-of-the-art rehabilitation hospital as part of the redevelopment and modernization of the university's health sciences campus. The 75-bed hospital, to be named the Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital, will be one of the most advanced rehabilitation facilities in the nation and will serve as a catalyst for the further development of the university's rehabilitation programs.

"This remarkable donation will allow the university to dramatically expand and advance our rehabilitation capabilities," says David Pershing, president of the University of Utah. "We are proud to partner with the Neilsen Foundation to create an innovative design for an accessible, patient-centered rehabilitation hospital, inspired by the visionary spirit of Craig Neilsen's exemplary life."

The building's interior and exterior spaces will reflect an accessible and dignified environment for all patients and their families to promote emotional well-being in addition to physical rehabilitation.

Craig Neilsen was no stranger to the rehabilitation hospital experience. In 1985, a car accident left him paralyzed from the neck down with only minimal use of one hand. Prior to the

accident, Craig was the owner of a thriving construction and real estate development business in southern Idaho and had recently acquired control of two small casinos on the Nevada-Idaho border. Following his injury, he became laser-focused on his businesses, including the founding and expansion of Ameristar Casinos, which he took public in 1993. In 2002, Craig established the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation, which through his personal generosity has become the largest private supporter of spinal cord injury causes in North America.

"Although the auto accident severely impacted my father's life, it was not the end, as many people might think; it was a new beginning," says Ray Neilsen, Craig's son and Co-Trustee and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Craig H. Neilsen Foundation. "My dad had incredible tenacity. He was a force of vision and passion who wanted nothing more than to help people like him. This hospital perfectly emulates his legacy."

Craig had several relationships with the University of Utah throughout his lifetime that continue to be honored through the philanthropy of the Neilsen Foundation. Not only did he spend time as a rehabilitation patient at the university, he spent many years as a student here as well, earning an MBA in 1964 and a law degree in 1967. The university also received several grants from the Neilsen Foundation during Craig's lifetime supporting the Rehabilitation Center and

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Rehabilitation Hospital Continued

providing scholarships for students with spinal cord injuries. After his passing in 2006, Craig was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Award from the university, the highest honor conferred on a graduate.

“The Neilsen Foundation’s gift enables us to reimagine rehabilitative care by embracing the diverse ideas and skills of the entire University of Utah community,” says Dr. Jeffrey Rosenbluth, the Craig H. Neilsen Presidential

Endowed Chair for Spinal Cord Injury Medicine, which was created in 2013. “Faculty, students and staff with diverse backgrounds in rehabilitation, engineering, computer science, exercise, therapy and design will work side by side with our patients in this collaborative space.”

The target completion date of the Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital is spring 2020.

János Kollár Establishes Endowed Lecturer in Mathematics

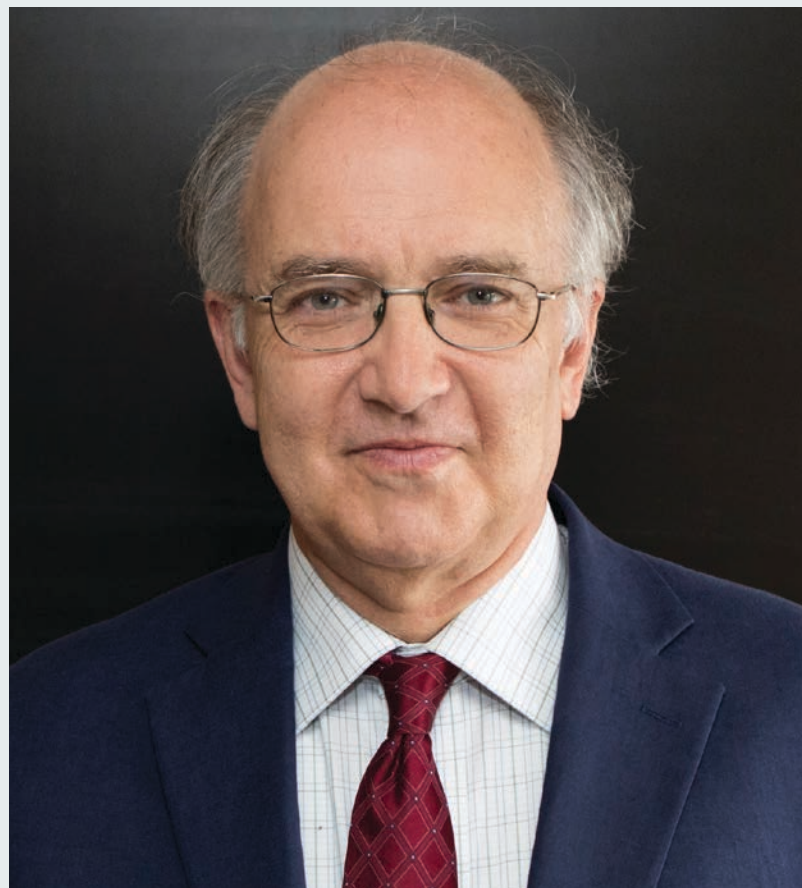
János Kollár, a Hungarian mathematician specializing in algebraic geometry and a former professor of mathematics at the University of Utah, is a co-recipient of the 2017 Shaw Prize in Mathematical Sciences. Established in 2002 in Hong Kong, and first awarded in 2004, the Shaw Prize honors outstanding contributions in astronomy, life science and medicine, and mathematical sciences. Kollár has donated a significant portion of his half of the prize to the U’s Department of Mathematics to establish the János Kollár Endowed Assistant Professor Lecturer at the U. Kollár says he was motivated to make the gift because the U provided such excellent working conditions during the 12 years he was here at the beginning of his career, and because several of the results that the prize committee recognized were developed while he was at the U.

Algebraic geometry—what exactly is it? Kollár defines it as the study of geometric objects that can be described by equations, the simplest examples being lines, circles, and ellipses. “I very much liked that one can use geometry and algebra—which are usually thought of as opposites—to solve problems together,” he says. “Then, as the subject advances, it brings in other areas of mathematics, like analysis, differential equations, and topology.”

Davar Khoshnevisan, chairman of the math department, says, “What makes this whole story compelling is that it’s directly related to the fact that algebraic geometry in the math department at Utah has a long and distinguished history, and János Kollár is an important part of that history.

“In 1970, when the College of Science was formed, the math department was already considered a powerhouse and one of the top research programs in the country. Kollár was recruited in 1987 and at the time, was recognized as one of the top algebraic geometers in the world. He and his department colleagues were instrumental in attracting and recruiting graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to the U.

“The dedication of the department and the students, the friendliness of the people, and the beautiful mountains and deserts were so memorable,” says Kollár, of his time at the U.



Shaw Prize recipient and mathematician János Kollár

The new endowment will help support the research activities of postdoctoral instructors in algebraic geometry or related fields in the department, continuing a legacy of excellence in mathematics research and education at the U. It will provide young faculty members with the financial flexibility to explore and advance scientific research and education at their discretion. This measure of academic freedom is critically important in the formative years of a faculty career and for the long-term success and vitality of the department.

“The university has a rich history in mathematics teaching and research,” says Khoshnevisan. “We owe a debt of gratitude to János Kollár for his contributions to that legacy.”

It is anticipated that the first János Kollár Lecturer will be selected by fall semester to coincide with the new academic year.

Benzley Endowed Teaching Scholarship Benefits Education Students



Verl and Shirley Benzley's generosity has benefited many areas of campus.

When Verl Benzley passed away unexpectedly in 2015, his wife Shirley wanted to do something special to honor him. Although he had retired from his work life as a banker with First Security Bank, he was a teacher at heart. Graduating from the U in 1961 with a bachelor's degree in history, he spent the next six years teaching at Glendale Junior High and East High in Salt Lake City.

"Earning Teacher of the Year from his students, while also working part-time with First Security Bank, was a highlight of Verl's work career," says Shirley. The framed certificate he received from the Future Teachers of America hangs in their home. Next to it is a congratulatory letter from First Security Bank President George S. Eccles which reads, in part, "This is certainly excellent recognition and a wonderful honor... you are deserving of it."

As a tribute to Verl's deep feelings for education, Shirley established the C. Verl Benzley, Jr. Endowed Teaching Scholarship in the College of Education to help defray educational costs for students who are studying to become teachers.

Recent graduates Christal Liu and Zeke Michel have the distinction of being named the first two recipients of the new scholarship. Both Liu and Michel graduated in 2017 with bachelor's degrees in special education and an emphasis in severe disabilities.

"I am interested in the teaching profession because I love interacting with kids," says Liu. "I have a brother who is in special education classes and working with him has helped me develop a passion for working with others

with similar challenges." The Benzley Scholarship helped Liu with educational expenses and allowed her more time to focus on her studies and to volunteer in local schools. "Shirley Benzley's generosity has encouraged me to pursue a graduate degree in special education and has inspired me to follow her footsteps." She too hopes to give back to future educators.

Michel is currently teaching an extended core curriculum unit in Canyons School District. "I love every minute of it," he says. And although he has not met Shirley, he says, "I would like her to know how grateful I am for the scholarship and to be given the opportunity to work in this field. I am truly in my dream career." Michel says the scholarship made it possible for him to graduate a year early with minimal debt, which is one of the goals of the scholarship. "I am currently thriving!" he says.

The generosity of Shirley and Verl Benzley has circulated throughout campus since 1959 when they first moved back to Salt Lake from San Francisco and bought season tickets to Utah football (a tradition Shirley continues today). Their connection to the U grew stronger as both their children graduated from the U. Over the years, the Benzley's generosity has benefitted many areas of campus, including the David Eccles School of Business, where several years ago they established an endowed scholarship in honor of Verl's father. And now, College of Education students who are studying to become teachers may apply for this new scholarship. "He would be so pleased that a scholarship bearing his name supports students with a desire to teach," says Shirley. "Verl felt there is nothing as rewarding, and hard, as teaching."



Christal Liu and Zeke Michel are the first two recipients of the Benzley Scholarship.

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- Larry H. Miller and Gail Miller Family Foundation

Major Gift from Miller Family Foundation to Fight Diabetes



Gail Miller, center, celebrates the launch of a new campaign, “Driving Out Diabetes: A Larry H. Miller Wellness Initiative,” with her family, and friends from U of U Health.

The Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation is donating \$5.3 million to establish a diabetes prevention program called “Driving Out Diabetes: A Larry H. Miller Family Wellness Initiative.” This bold enterprise, announced November 13, 2017, will incorporate a novel, three-pronged approach to attack diabetes through prevention and outreach, clinical care, and research and training. Additionally, the program will proactively deliver screening services to populations who are most vulnerable to developing diabetes. The most common form of diabetes, type 2, can be prevented if caught early enough.

“As part of our mission to enrich lives, we are partnering with University of Utah Health on this initiative with the goal of having a lasting impact, especially on some of the most vulnerable in our state,” says Gail Miller, chair of the foundation. Miller describes her late husband Larry as a man with an iron will who found a way to accomplish everything he wanted, but stated, “when you get an illness like diabetes, you cannot will it away.” Larry, a noted Utah businessman and philanthropist, died from complications of type 2 diabetes when he was 64 years old. “Our family knows firsthand the effects of diabetes and we are committed to help educate and save others from this devastating disease,” says Miller.

More than 30 million Americans or roughly 10 percent of the total United States population suffer from diabetes. It remained the 7th leading cause of death in the United States in 2015, with 79,535 death certificates listing it as the underlying cause of death, and a total of 252,806 death certificates listing diabetes as an underlying or contributing cause of death.

“This exciting new initiative merges Gail Miller’s vision and passion for reaching people before they get diabetes—particularly the underserved—with the nationally-recognized community of diabetes researchers at U of U Health who are pioneering novel approaches to treating and preventing diabetes,” says Lorris Betz, senior vice president for health sciences and CEO of University of Utah Health.

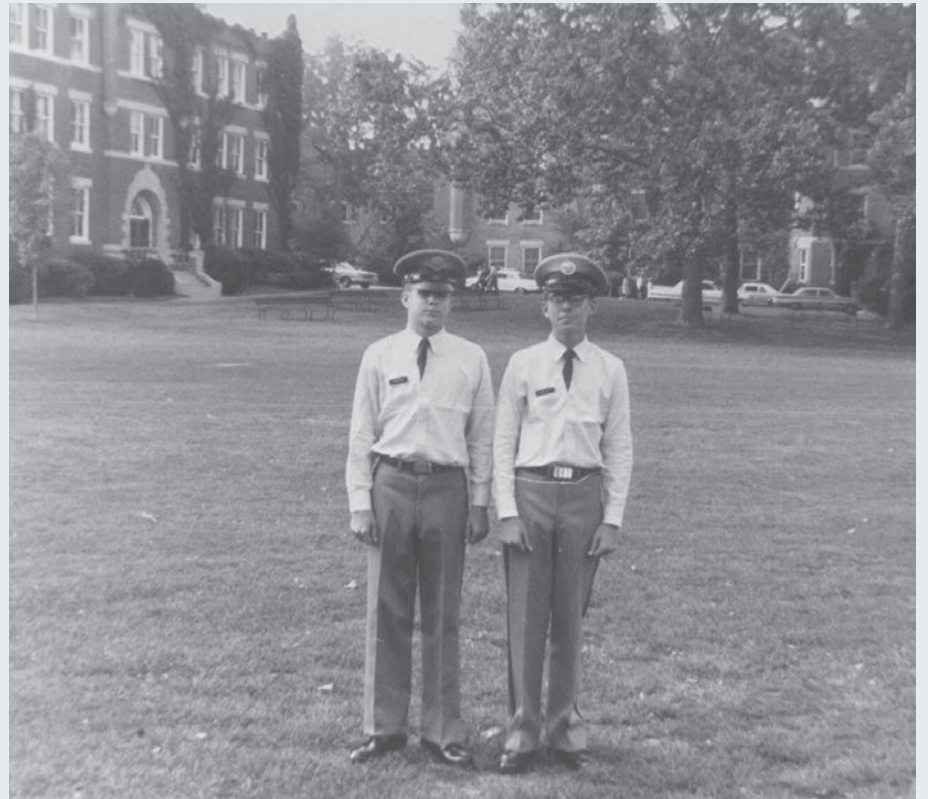
Angie Fagerlin, chair of Population Health Sciences at U of U Health and director of the Driving Out Diabetes: A Larry H. Miller Family Wellness Initiative says, “We are incredibly grateful for this opportunity to play a crucial role in the efforts to eradicate the disease in Utah and serve as a model for the nation and the world. We deeply appreciate the strong support from The Larry H. Miller Family Foundation and, of course, Gail Miller.”



U President Dave Pershing and Gail Miller greet each other at the celebratory event announcing the new diabetes prevention program made possible by a generous gift from the Larry H. and Gail Miller Family Foundation

Childhood Friendship Results in Scholarship for Students of Social Work

The two 15-year-olds stand on the grounds of their new school staring at the camera, anxious as they contemplate what awaits them at Culver Military Academy. It is their first day at the college prep school in Indiana. They have just donned their uniforms and have yet to learn how to properly stand at attention. The year was 1964, and new cadets Hank Liese and Colin Brown could not have imagined they would celebrate their 50th Culver high school reunion in the spring of 2017 as a retiring dean at the University of Utah College of Social Work and the president and CEO of JM Family Enterprises in Deerfield Beach, Florida. The two met in 1959 as fifth graders at the American School in Manila, the Philippines, and became best friends. Together they schemed to attend Culver, following tradition in both of their families.



Fifteen-year-olds Colin Brown and Hank Liese at Culver Military Academy in 1964.

Shortly after their Golden Anniversary reunion at Culver, Liese was humbled when Brown announced he wanted to make a gift to the College of Social Work in honor of his childhood friend and the impact Liese had on his students and colleagues during his 24 years at the university. Liese suggested a small scholarship, but Brown was adamant that he wanted to do something “big.” And he did, creating the six-figure Colin W. Brown Endowment that will support the Hank Liese Scholarship for bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral students at an estimated \$4,000

per year. Per Liese’s request, special consideration will be given to those pursuing social work as a second career. “I was a late-blooming social worker myself,” he says, “coming to the profession after 12 years in public relations and marketing. Teaching over the years, I was continually impressed by students who were returning to the classroom after careers in other fields. I can appreciate the challenges they face as non-traditional students, the financial sacrifice they and their families make, and the courage they demonstrate in learning and exercising entirely new skills.”



Hank Liese and Colin W. Brown have been friends since they were in fifth grade.

Reflecting on the new scholarship in his honor, Liese says, “Colin’s generosity knows no bounds. He is a major donor to Culver, and now to the College of Social Work. I am moved by his kindness and hope he will be able to join me at our fall scholarship dinners in the coming years.”

Brown says he is thrilled to be able to recognize and acknowledge Liese’s and his great friendship through the new endowment. “Our histories are intertwined, given the experiences we have shared over the past half-century plus, from grade school in Manila to high school at Culver, and now to more frequent visiting since we are both in retirement mode.”

Just recently, Liese made a planned gift of his own to the Colin W. Brown Endowment at the U, and also to the endowment Brown started at Culver—a touching demonstration of shared support for each other, and for students at both institutions.

Our thanks to the College of Social Work for collaboration on this story.

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- John M. Zrno

Opening the Door to Higher Ed One Refugee at a Time

When Roger and Sara Boyer became aware of the number of highly motivated, qualified, and capable refugees in Utah who had been turned down in their efforts to gain admission to college, they wanted to help. Of the state’s approximately 60,000 refugees, those who want to attend college have the same set of challenges experienced by all prospective higher education students—increasing tuition costs, student debt, and an ever more competitive environment. But they also have additional burdens—language barriers, culture shock, painful pasts, and the current political climate—that make their challenges especially daunting.

After studying the situation, the Boyers decided they could do the most good by identifying the gaps in services for refugees and then finding a way to fill those gaps. In January 2014 they established One Refugee, a private foundation, to do just that. One Refugee provides financial assistance to Utah refugees who are prepared and ready to succeed in college and then partners with the University of Utah and Salt Lake Community College on the admissions process. The goal is graduation and successful transition into a meaningful career. One Refugee covers pretty much anything the student needs—from tuition, textbooks, computers, and tutoring, to citizenship fees, prescription eyeglasses, and dental services.

“When we started in 2014, we hoped to get 100 enrolled, and after four years, we have assisted a combined total of more than 300 from both schools,” says Roger, who is a U alum and chairman of The Boyer Company, one of the largest full-service real estate development

firms in the Western U.S. He and Sara are committed to funding this program long-term. “Our education initiative is not a standard scholarship program where we just write checks to cover tuition,” says Roger. “Our program is holistic and we work with all students one-on-one to assist them with their needs.” Sara adds, “We have loved getting to know the students and their stories. We see them at least twice a year and this has been incredibly rewarding for Roger and me.”

In early 2017, the Boyers realized that earning a diploma wasn’t enough to ensure a successful future, so One Refugee partnered with the O.C. Tanner Company and added a robust careers initiative designed to assist students in their employment pursuits after graduation, creating a seamless path through college and into a career.

The One Refugee partnership with the U is just one example of the Boyers’s loyal support of campus. For the past four decades, they have enriched areas including athletics, the David Eccles School of Business, and the School of Medicine, to name just a few. Their thoughtful support for refugee students is especially appreciated at this time when that population is dealing with so much uncertainty.

“We wanted to give back to the community in a concentrated way,” says Roger. “We know that education is the best pathway forward for all individuals, and refugees are a particularly vulnerable population. Without education and training opportunities, they are at risk for generational poverty. We saw the One Refugee program as a possible intervention.”



Refugee Sandrine Ingabire is greeted by Sara and Roger Boyer, founders of One Refugee.

Heading True North

The Childs' Legacy of Generosity

Bill and Pat Child's support of the University of Utah dates back to the early 1970s when their initial gifts provided funding to Pioneer Theatre, athletics, and the President's Annual Giving Fund. With a consistent history of annual gifts since, their generosity has touched countless areas of campus. A recent example is their support of the Department of Finance in the David Eccles School of Business and several student scholarships there.

The Childs' gifts to the business school actually started in 1999 when Bill, a U alum and CEO of R.C. Willey Home Furnishings, was the distinguished speaker at a year-end banquet for the school's undergraduate finance club.

"The club was preparing to establish a fund where students could learn about investing by managing a portfolio of stocks using real money," says Elizabeth Tashjian, a professor and undergraduate finance director at the school. "Bill was impressed by the students' enthusiasm for the enterprise and he and Pat quietly wrote a check to help build capital for the fund. In the nearly two decades since, the Student Investment Fund has grown from its initial \$50,000 to over \$500,000 through the generous support of the Childs, along with several additional donors, and from investment gains."

The funds are managed by an exceptional group of undergraduate finance students who take honors courses, conduct research, make investment decisions, and present their findings to distinguished professionals in the finance community—which includes Bill Child. Most recently, Bill and Pat established the Child Scholars, a program for senior students who participated in the investment fund the previous year and are now giving back by serving as mentors to current students.

Bill's business career began in the small town of Syracuse, Utah, where he was born and raised, and where he lived with his first wife Darline and their four young children. He worked with his father-in-law, Rufus Call Willey, going door to door selling stoves, washers, and refrigerators from the back of a truck. When Willey passed away in 1954, Bill and his mother-in-law took over the small, one-man operation, eventually expanding its merchandise to include home furnishings. A decade later, Darline passed away due to complications from a blood clot at the untimely age of 31. Later, Bill met Patricia Wright and they married in 1966. They have four children together. Pat also helped to raise Bill's other four children.

BILL CHILD'S LIST OF SIMPLE RULES AND KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Treat everyone the way you want to be treated.
- Little things make the difference.
- Be honest.
- Do the right thing.
- Don't follow the herd.
- Hire the right personnel.
- Treat employees like family.
- Build a business to keep, not to sell.
- Relationships matter.



Pat and Bill Child enjoy the holidays at the Pershing home.

Under Bill's leadership, the R.C. Willey company grew into a \$1 billion-plus business, with stores in multiple western states. "I had the attitude that I could succeed in anything I wanted to do as long as I was willing to pay the price and work hard," says Child, explaining his accomplishments. "My education provided me with the confidence I needed to solve problems. I have tried to be honest in all my dealings, both personal and business. Integrity is so important. People being able to trust you is a huge part of success."

After 48 years as CEO of the company, Bill was ready to sell—but he needed to find the right buyer. And that he did—in Warren Buffett—whose Berkshire Hathaway company bought R.C. Willey in 1996. Bill continued working as CEO until his retirement in 2003, and still enjoys spending time there.

"Bill Child represents the best of America," writes Warren Buffet, in his foreword to the 2009 biography on Child, *How to Build a Business Warren Buffet Would Buy: The R. C. Willey Story*. "In matters of family, philanthropy, business, or just plain citizenship, anyone who follows in his footsteps is heading true north."

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How do Venus flytraps lure in unsuspecting victims? Why do cheetahs run so fast? Why do chimpanzees have stronger grips than humans?

From the inside out, every living thing—including humans—is a machine built to survive. Thanks to the generous support of presenting sponsor Zions Bank, major sponsors My Good Fund, Rio Tinto Kennecott, and Wheeler Machinery Co., and contributions from a host of other exhibition supporters, visitors to the Natural History Museum of Utah will have an opportunity to find out when *Nature's Ultimate Machines*, an exhibition organized by The Chicago Field Museum in partnership with the Denver Museum of Nature and Science—will open to the public February 10 through September 3, at the Rio Tinto Center. Embark on an incredible journey to discover some of nature's most amazing biological marvels through hands-on-interactives (cool exhibits that let you pull a lever, push a button, twist a dial, squeeze stuff, etc. to see how things work) in both English and Spanish. Jump at the chance to “fly” an interactive, designed to show differences between long and short wings. Become intrigued by the stories and science behind biomimicry—the idea that systems found in nature can be used as inspiration for modern inventions, like Velcro, chainsaws, and wind turbines. Discover more. Visit the museum!



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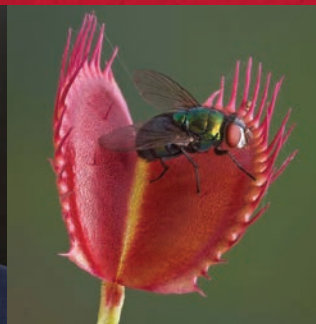
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