



**For Immediate Release**

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**Science is Fun Cruise returns to wow and educate student groups with hands-on experiments, including hoisting buckets, floating balloons and constructing skyscrapers**

CHICAGO – Hoisting water buckets, floating inflated balloons, playing with a seesaw and checking out slimy creatures are all part of the Science is Fun Cruise returning for a second season aboard Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline. The cruise is designed for school groups and summer camps with fun on-board experiments that will explore the Chicago River and its buildings and bridges during the 90-minute Chicago River and Lake Michigan cruise. **Open to groups of 25 or more on Mondays through Wednesdays, Science is Fun will begin its 2014 season, Monday, May 5 at 10 am.** All cruises depart from Mercury's Riverside Gardens dock at the southeast corner and lower level of the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive.

Mercury's Science is Fun Cruise meets the standards of the Illinois Learning and NextGen Science Curriculum Standards and Chicago Public School system. It is the only boat cruise to offer this type of science field experience program.

Using buckets, balloons, test tubes, pennies, PVC tubing and a seesaw, "Professor Mercury" leads the groups in a series of experiments using the Scientific Method of: research question, hypothesis, experiment and conclusion. He presents five research questions to his young audience covering five science subjects as the 90-minute cruise begins:

1. ENVIRONMENTAL - Which body of water is cleaner: Lake Michigan or the Chicago River?
2. PHYSICS - How does a boat float?
3. MECHANICS - How much power is needed to raise/lower Chicago's famous bascule (seesaw) bridges?
4. ENGINEERING - How does a skyscraper stand up to gravity?
5. BIOLOGY - How can we stop the spread of invasive species?

Each question is followed by children offering their hypotheses and performing a hands-on experiment. Scooping up river and lake water into buckets and then using small test tubes to test the water; filling flat and inflated balloons with pennies to learn about boat buoyancy; watching the effects of gravity on unreinforced PVC tubing and how it relates to tall buildings; and checking out slimy marine life that could endanger Chicago's waterways and proposing solutions to remove them, are just a few of the activities to engage the young scientists to be more aware of Chicago River environs.

"The Science is Fun cruise is aptly named. Our students were fully engaged in the investigations, the demonstrations were valuable lessons and well understood, and the crew made the morning aboard the ship a fun experience for all of us." Tad Smith, principal, San Miguel School, Chicago.

The cruise will also tap into interactive social media by posting groups' results of the water tests on [mercurycruises.com](http://mercurycruises.com) and social media sites, as well as students' ideas to deter invasive species. To make group reservations for Mercury's Science is Fun Cruise, contact Dan Maguire at 312-332-1366.

**Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline** is a third-generation owned and operated family-friendly cruise line. The 125-passenger *Skyline Queen* and 117-passenger *Chicago's Little Lady* provides narrated daytime and evening lake and river cruises, a 3-D fireworks cruise and Chicago's only Canine Cruise. Mercury is committed to green practices and recycles used oil, engine batteries, beverage containers, cardboard, and paper; uses B11 biodiesel fuel, low-flush toilets and environmentally safe cleaning solutions; prints brochures on recycled paper; and promotes the use of public transportation by staff and crew. All vessels are operated by a U.S. Coast Guard-licensed captain and crew and carry 100% passenger capacity life preservers. Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline departs from Riverside Gardens on Chicago's Riverwalk at the southeast corner of the Michigan Avenue Bridge at Wacker Drive. Follow Mercury Cruises on Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.