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‘Fire and Ice’ exhibit lets kids get close to dinos from 2 extremes

BY LISA CHAMOFF

The dinosaur exhibit at a certain New York City museum may be impressive, but kids have the opportunity — in fact, they are encouraged — to get hands-on with dinosaurs, along with their fossils and habitats, at a new, interactive exhibit that opens Saturday at the Long Island Children’s Museum in Garden City.

“Dinosaurs: Land of Fire and Ice” was created by the Minnesota Children’s Museum and has stumped over to the LICM for a nearly four-month stay. The bilingual exhibit — displays are in both English and Spanish — is designed for children ages 3 to 10. It is based in the Cretaceous period, ended 66 million years ago, and includes two environments with hands-on activities, including dramatic play and sensory experiences.

At a field research station in the Land of Fire section of the exhibit, children can don a vest and goggles to become paleontologists, uncovering fossils with brushes. They can also put on insect costumes and pretend to be creatures that shared Earth with dinosaurs and walk over a “bog” with a squishy surface similar to the forest floor during this period.

Wandering over to the Land of Ice side, visitors can explore ice caves, sail down an ice slide and touch a Troodon and an Edmontosaurus, dinosaurs that were residents of frigid Alaska.

The museum will host programs connected to the exhibit, including one on fossils and another on dinosaur eggs. The LICM theater also will host “More Than Just Dinosaurs,” a film with Dustin Growick, who is known as the “Dinosaur Whisperer.”

The exhibit makes connections to school science curriculum, says Aimee Terzulli, director of education and visitor service for the museum. Kids may be able to show off their own knowledge. “Some children know more about dinosaurs than adults,” Terzulli says. “I’ve had kids...”