

# 'Grossology' makes science fun for children

By Alex Hammond

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Snot. Warts. Belches. All the nasty, dirty, smelly things about the human body used to be taboo. Now, they have an exhibit, and it opens in Asheville Friday at the Heath Adventure inside Pack Place.

"I had an epiphany when I was clipping my toenails. This was about 15 years ago now, and I started thinking about that gunk beneath my toenails. I thought, 'Whoa, kids like gross stuff. I'll just make up a new science called Grossology,'" said Sylvia Branzei, a former schoolteacher from Oregon.

It stunk. Er, stuck.

Sylvia Branzei wrote her first book in 1995 to try and hook students into wanting to learn. Now, she has an entire series of books based on the approach of embracing the nasty and smelly and not-so-nice parts of the human body.

"A friend told me, 'You're either going to sell one book or a million.' Now here we are," she said.

The book series ranges in topics from the human body, animals and experiments, then finally *Grossology and You*.

"We were really conscious when we did the series that they come out in an order," she said. "*Grossology and You* is like an advanced *Grossology* book."

Branzei also has an exhibit, developed by Advanced Animations, LLC, that tours internationally. The Health Adventure is

getting the larger of two national exhibits for a cut rate this year, she said.

"They were able to get the large exhibit because of the economy," she said. "We've dropped the price, that's for sure."

According to Jan Shoener, account executive at Advanced Animations, the exhibit's arrival in Asheville is a symptom of the economy.

"We had a date come available," Shoener said. "And (the Health Adventure) was able to host it."

"Mission Children's Hospital is actually sponsoring *Grossology*," said Becky Brown, one of Mission Children's Hospital's marketing managers. "We actually have one of our physicians who said that he'd seen this exhibit, I think in Texas, and he said that it's really good."

Brown also said the exhibit provides a chance to reach out to children in a way that other programs do not.

"The different exhibits just seem to fit in real well with a lot of what the physicians at Mission Children's Hospital do," she said. "We feel like *Grossology* really has a lot of health education to offer to children."

Stephanie Kiser, director of community health and corporate wellness at Mission Hospitals, said health care education is one of their biggest concerns.

"A lot of time people don't think of hospitals having a vested interest in the health of the community, but it's in our mission statement," she said.

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Photo Courtesy of Advanced Exhibits

Sylvia Branzei wrote a series of books about *Grossology*. An exhibit based on her work opens inside Pack Place on Friday.

# HOLA's salsa dance night improves campus interaction



Ian Hayes - Staff Photographer

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The Hispanic Outreach for Learning Awareness held its first "salsa night" of the semester on Friday, bringing students together for a celebration of Latin dance culture.

"For a while, there was no room on the dance floor. We had a salsa lesson by Andres Montoya, a local salsa promoter and dancer. Lots of people had their first salsa lesson and danced to music that was new to them. To me, that alone means the night was a success," said Tirzah Villegas, advertising vice president of HOLA.

HOLA works toward equal college access and improved diversity on campus. Members said approximately 60 people attended the dance social, which involved free salsa lessons, food and the opportunity to meet new people.

"At a typical salsa night, people meet

each other, receive beginner's dancing lessons and dance closely with a partner," said Jensel Garcia-Robles, co-president of HOLA.

"I enjoy the salsa nights because I'm not the best dancer, and it allows me to relax with some new people and friends who are trying this for the first time and other friends who are better-versed in the sexy art of the dances. I get to dance with some of the beautiful people who attend. We also raise money while doing so," Garcia-Robles said.

HOLA says every salsa night is a fundraiser for a different Latino cause. The get-together aided a nonprofit organization called Nuestro Centro, which deals with under-documented people living in America.

"Nuestro Centro is currently still working with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement raid on Mills factory

HOLA, a Latin advocacy group at UNCA, hosts monthly salsa dance nights in the Highsmith Union and strives to improve campus diversity.

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