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Thousands of Public Libraries Gear Up for a Summer of Space

BOULDER, Colo.—April 3, 2019. The Space Science Institute (SSI) is home to the STAR Library Network (*STAR Net*) and its *NASA@ My Library* program. The *STAR Net* team, in partnership with the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) and NASA, are working together to share science- and technology-related activities and resources to libraries across the nation as part of NASA's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing. This umbrella initiative is called *Summer of Space*.

This summer, 16,000 libraries across the country will become centers of space exploration. The slogan "A Universe of Stories" was chosen by CSLP members to help inspire children of all ages to dream big, believe in themselves, and create their own story. This is an ideal time to engage the public in learning about human space exploration and the achievements that we have made in understanding how our Universe works. Astronomers, planetary scientists, and other subject matter experts are invited to collaborate with their local library to make this a memorable event that can rival the successful 2017 solar eclipse. For the eclipse, *STAR Net* staff distributed 2.1 million solar viewing glasses to 7,100 organizations, including public library branches, bookmobiles, tribal libraries, library consortia, and state libraries. A similar reach is expected for this event.

The centerpiece of this summer's event is *STAR Net's Summer of Space* webpage (<https://www.starnetlibraries.org/summer-of-space/>). This resource portal includes a link to the *Universe of Stories* collection on *STAR Net's STEM Activity Clearinghouse* (<http://clearinghouse.starnetlibraries.org>), a website where librarians and library staff can find high quality, vetted STEM activities that are appropriate for library use. To date, over 3,100 libraries have registered on the site to receive important news and resource notifications.

STAR Net has created a map on its *Summer of Space* webpage that shows where registered libraries are located across the nation (all fifty states are represented). This map serves as an important resource for libraries to collaborate with each other and for STEM partners to find libraries with which they can collaborate. The site also includes a comprehensive collection of resources that includes collaboration opportunities, printable materials, promotional materials, inspirational items and many other resources that libraries can utilize to make their 2019 summer learning program a great success. Libraries that register are eligible for many types of giveaways such as *Getting a Feel for Lunar Craters*, a NASA-funded Braille book (2,000 copies) and a series of science books donated by Scholastic (800 copies). They also have a chance to win 4 free Orion StarBlast telescopes.

STAR Net is offering a series of webinars open to all libraries that will help them prepare for their *Universe of Stories* event. They also learn about *NASA@ My Library* and CSLP resources. With funding from NASA, the Space Science Institute and Lunar and Planetary Institute are conducting 12 NASA STEM Workshops in collaboration with state libraries, CSLP, and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies. The workshop facilitators draw on more than a decade of experience in providing NASA workshops for public library staff.

NASA@ My Library partners with two very successful NASA-funded space science outreach organizations: Solar System Ambassadors (<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/ssa/>) and Night Sky Network (<http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov>). Getting the word out to public libraries about these two networks through a series of webinars and distributing flyers to *STAR Net's* extensive community of practice (over 8,000 members) have really paid dividends. This started with the 2017 eclipse and continues with the 2019 summer learning event. SSA outreach events at libraries have grown by about 200% compared to 2016. The same result holds for NSN events. To build upon these NASA programs, *NASA@ My Library* is also inviting astronomers, astronomy hobbyists, museum educators, and science teachers to collaborate with libraries in their own communities, helping to put on space exploration outreach events. They can use the *Summer of Space* map to find registered libraries in their region.

About the STAR Library Network (STAR Net)

Libraries across the country have been reimagining their community role to strengthen community-based learning and foster critical thinking, problem solving, and engagement in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Public libraries serve people of all races, ages, and socio-economic backgrounds. They are becoming “on-ramps” to STEM learning by creating environments that welcome newcomers to the community.

NCIL’s *NASA@ My Library* initiative leverage and expand upon *STAR Net*, a hands-on learning network for libraries and their communities across the country (www.starnetlibraries.org). *STAR Net* focuses on helping library professionals build their STEM skills by providing “science-technology activities and resources” (STAR) and training to use those resources. It includes a *STEM Activity Clearinghouse*, blogs, a webinar series, workshops at conferences, and a monthly e-newsletter. Partners include the American Library Association, Association of Rural and Small Libraries, Collaborative Summer Library Program, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, Afterschool Alliance, Cornerstones of Science, and many others. The *STAR Net* community has grown tremendously over the past couple of years and now numbers over 8,000 members.

About the National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL)

NCIL is dedicated to expanding the understanding and participation of families, youth, teachers, and citizens in science and technology (www.ncil.spacescience.org/). We foster collaboration between STEM professionals and educators to bring the wonder of science and engineering directly to people. Our programs span a range of audience needs and delivery methods, including traveling museum and public Library exhibitions; educational films, videos, and websites; hands-on resources and activities; and educator workshops. Our programs are designed to be accessible to all, and to inspire the next generation of STEM innovators. They have a positive impact on rural and urban communities nationwide and reach underserved audiences with inspirational, fun, and innovative STEM activities.

About the SPACE SCIENCE INSTITUTE

The Space Science Institute (SSI) is a nonprofit, public benefit research and education 501(c)(3) corporation founded in 1992 with a vision to expand humankind's understanding and appreciation of planet Earth, our Solar System, and the universe beyond. SSI's mission is to (a) enable scientists to make new discoveries, (b) increase science and technology literacy for people of all ages and backgrounds, and (c) inspire youth to pursue science-technology education and career opportunities. It is headquartered in Boulder, Colorado, with locations distributed across the U.S. and internationally.

www.spacescience.org

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