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PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE CENTERS OF ECLIPSE EDUCATION FOR THE AUGUST 21, 2017 SOLAR ECLIPSE

BOULDER, Colo.—June 21, 2017. More than two million pairs of eclipse glasses are being distributed free through public libraries in the U.S. for the eclipse of the Sun taking place on August 21, 2017. About 4,800 organizations, including public library branches, bookmobiles, tribal libraries, library consortia, and state libraries, have received a package of free safe-viewing glasses, plus a 24-page information booklet on how best to do public outreach programs about the eclipse. The project is supported, in part, by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, with additional help from Google, National Science Foundation (NSF), and NASA. Dr. Robert Kirshner, Chief Program Officer, Science, at the Moore Foundation, adds “The Moore Foundation is pleased to help two million eyes enjoy and understand this astronomical spectacle with astronomical spectacles.”

The eclipse project was conceived by three astronomers, Andrew Fraknoi (Foothill College), Dennis Schatz (Pacific Science Center), and Douglas Duncan (University of Colorado.) Together they brought the idea to Paul Dusenbery, Director of the Space Science Institute’s National Center for Interactive Learning (NCIL). NCIL manages the STAR Library Education Network (*STAR_Net*) (supported by NASA, NSF, and other organizations) to help libraries with STEM programming. NCIL manages the library eclipse program, with more information available at: www.starnetlibraries.org/2017eclipse/. There you can see an interactive map of participating libraries. “This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for libraries and their communities to work together to participate in a celestial event of this scope,” says Project Director Paul Dusenbery. “Many organizations like NASA, the National Science Foundation, and the American Astronomical Society, are working together to help people understand and view the eclipse safely, and we are delighted to be part of this

important educational effort.”

The eclipse information booklet libraries received can be downloaded free by anyone at: <http://www.starnetlibraries.org/EclipseGuide/>. The 24-page booklet includes background information on eclipses, times when the eclipse is visible over different parts of the country, safe viewing techniques, suggestions for good outreach partners for libraries, and more.

Astronomers, astronomy hobbyists (e.g. Night Sky Network - <http://nightsky.jpl.nasa.gov>), Solar System Ambassadors (<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/ssa>), museum educators, park rangers, and science teachers will be partnering with libraries in their own communities, helping to put on eclipse outreach events, but more people are needed. Since an estimated 500 million people in North America will be able to see the eclipse on August 21, everyone who knows about eclipse science and viewing is urged to become involved with a library in their community, helping to get our country ready for the big event.

About the STAR Library Education 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 Moore Foundation project and *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, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, Afterschool Alliance, Cornerstones of Science, and many others.

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.nc4il.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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