

Lewis Center Hosts First Ever Noche de las Estrellas Event in the United States



San Bernardino, CA — On Saturday night, The Lewis Center for Educational Research hosted the first Noche de las Estrellas event in the U.S. The Lewis Center partnered with NASA Ames Research Center, the Mexican Space Agency (AEM), and Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México (UNAM) to bring this amazing opportunity to the Inland Empire.

Hosted at the Norton Science and Language Academy (NSLA), a Lewis Center school, the atmosphere was festive and lively as over 1,000 members of the community came together under the stars participating in STEM and multicultural activities.

Community members of all ages enjoyed a multitude of diverse booths that featured a STEM or multicultural theme with activities and goodies for the kids to enjoy.



Community members participating in a variety of STEM and multicultural activities and booths.

“We knew it would be a perfect fit for our dual immersion and STEM programs at NSLA and a great way to connect with our community. We thought we would start small this year and expand in the future, but tonight far exceeded our expectations,” explained Lewis Center President/CEO Lisa Lamb.

The event’s program included sessions with NASA/JPL scientists speaking on their experience at NASA and fielding questions for future scientists. Towards the late evening, President Lamb and Dr. Brian Day from NASA Ames Research Center were able to virtually invite Mario Manuel Arreola Santander, Director of Science and Space Technology Outreach for AEM, to provide insight to the crowd on the origins of Noche de las Estrellas.

Dr. Day had this to say, “This event far surpassed my most optimistic hopes. The payoff was clear in the enthusiasm and

wonder expressed by the large audience enjoying a perfectly clear, warm, festive night under the stars. Noche could not have asked for a better start here in California!”

Both the High Desert Astronomical Society and the Big Bear Valley Astronomical Society along with other space science enthusiasts came out in support bringing with them over 25 telescopes and binoculars for the community to use.

The Lewis Center also hosted sessions in their Mission Control room where community members had the opportunity to learn more about the Goldstone Apple Valley Radio Telescope (GAVRT), a literal out-of-this world program in which students are able to operate a 34-meter radio telescope from the classroom. The GAVRT program stems from the unique 23-year partnership between the Lewis Center and NASA/JPL, which strives to inspire and enrich student learning through their active contribution to professional science.



NSLA ASB students photographed in the Lewis Center Mission Control room next to the iconic Astronaut display.

Noche de las Estrellas, or Night of the Stars, has been sponsored by the Mexican Space Agency and the Universidad Nacional Autonoma de México (UNAM) since 2009, bringing together more than 500,000 attendees throughout Mexico and Central America. It has now officially made its way to the United States with the goal to continue to expand throughout California.



Children learning how to operate and control miniature Mars Rovers around a large Mars map.

San Bernardino County resident, Mike Gonzalez, was excited to attend, "I loved how they brought Mexican culture into the mix. I really felt the energy when the NASA scientist on stage teleconferenced with a Mexican Space Station. Seriously, one of the most awesome experiences!"

“Watching participants young and old see Saturn, Jupiter, Venus or the Moon for the first time through a telescope was magical,” stated President Lamb, “I look forward to next year’s Noche de las Estrellas. Next year, we hope to be able to send a cohort of our high school students to Mexico City as correspondents while we continue to grow this tradition in San Bernardino. Our goal is to bring many more events like this to our community!”



NSLA Folklorico Dancers performing “Un Poco Loco” from *Coco*.

For more information on future events, please visit www.lewiscenter.org.

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