Project ASTRO - Celebrates 8 Years!

Project ASTRO continues strong into its eighth year in Tucson. The training workshop for Project ASTRO-Tucson occurred on 3-4 October 2003 at the University of Arizona with 33 teachers and 27 astronomers in this year’s program. Highlights of the workshop included a talk on the craters of the Moon by noted planetary scientist, Dr. Charles Wood, a talk on student misconceptions in astronomy by science education specialist, Dr. Ed Prather, and the participation of the group in 10 hands-on, minds-on activities. One set of activities, led by Mike Zawaski of the Space Science Institute in Boulder, was on “kinesthetic astronomy.” Another was based on integrating art, poetry and scientific journaling from the book “Moon Journals” and was presented by the former director of Project ASTRO, Suzanne Jacoby, her teacher partner, Susie Townsend, and NOAO staff member, Kathie Coil. A trip to Kitt Peak National Observatory provided the inspiration for this last interdisciplinary activity.

The next follow-up workshop will be held in February 28, 2004, at the home and observatory of David and Wendee Levy.

To date 330 teachers and astronomers have been trained to bring hands-on, astronomy-oriented activities into science classrooms. More than 100 of these teacher/astronomer partnerships from past years remain active today. Through them, Project ASTRO-Tucson has reached more than 18,000 students and counting. The project’s adaptability, applicability, and approach to a wide variety of audiences has enabled its growth and expansion to other projects (Family ASTRO, ASTRO-Chile).