

for release
September 13, 2019

for more information
Gregg L. Williams
(219) 650-5486



The Autumn Sky

The Merrillville Community Planetarium presents The Autumn Sky, a public program beginning on October 4 and continuing through October 19. The show will be presented on Friday, October 4, 11, and 18, and Saturday, October 12 and 19 at 7:30 p.m. Additional showings may be added if needed. The planetarium opens for seating 30 minutes before the show begins. No one will be admitted after the program starts. The program lasts from 60 to 90 minutes.

Fall is a great time to observe the night sky. Many bright stars and constellations are visible including the Summer Triangle, Pegasus the Winged Horse, and Andromeda the Chained Maiden. Plus, Jupiter and Saturn will be visible in the evening sky! The planetarium's Gift Shop will be open and, weather permitting, an outdoor observing session will be offered following the program.

Admission to public programs is \$4.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Seating is limited and should be reserved by calling (219) 650-5486 or visiting the planetarium's web site at **www.mcpstars.org**. Tickets are sold at the door. Groups may arrange for a private show by calling the planetarium at (219) 650-5486.

This is the first of four public programs for the 2019-2020 school year. Our next public show will be "The Inner Solar System" in January 2020. For more information about the planetarium, visit **www.mcpstars.org**. The planetarium is located in Clifford Pierce Middle School at 199 East 70th Avenue in Merrillville, Indiana. Please park and enter on the west side of the building.

Merrillville Community Planetarium
Public Planetarium Programs
2019-2020 School Year



All programs start at 7:30 p.m. and the planetarium opens for seating 30 minutes before show time. No one is admitted after the program starts. Programs last from 60 to 90 minutes. Admission to public programs is \$4.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children. Seating is limited and should be reserved by calling (219) 650-5486 or visiting www.mcpstars.org. Tickets are sold at the door. Groups may arrange for a private show by calling the planetarium at (219) 650-5486.

The planetarium's Gift Shop is open for each show. Weather permitting, an outdoor observing session is offered following each program. The planetarium is located in Clifford Pierce Middle School at 199 East 70th Avenue in Merrillville, Indiana. Please park and enter on the west side of the building.

The Autumn Sky

Friday, October 4, 11, 18
Saturday, October 12, 19

Fall is a great time to observe the night sky. Many bright stars and constellations are visible including the Summer Triangle, Pegasus the Winged Horse, and Andromeda the Chained Maiden. Plus, Jupiter and Saturn will be visible in the evening sky!

The Inner Solar System

Friday, January 10, 17, 24
Saturday, January 18, 25

This program explores the inner solar system, including the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars and the asteroid belt. Beginning with the formation of the solar system, we'll compare the inner and outer planets before exploring each of the planets near the sun and the asteroids.

Galaxies and the Universe

Friday, April 10, 17, 24
Saturday, April 18, 25

How big is the Universe? How many stars are there? What are galaxies? How did the Universe come to be? These are some of the questions that we will try to answer while exploring the skies of summer and fall. Along the way, we'll learn about the Milky Way, Andromeda Galaxy, and Big Bang theory.

Larry Cat in Space

Friday, July 10, 17, 24
Saturday, July 18, 25

Larry Cat is a curious feline whose human friend Diane is a geologist being sent to the moon. Larry is miserable until he gets an idea: follow Diane to the moon! Larry stows away aboard one of Diane's trunks and his adventure begins. "Larry Cat in Space" is a family program for children of all ages.

Merrillville Community Planetarium
 Clifford Pierce Middle School
 199 East 70th Avenue
 Merrillville, Indiana 46410

School and Group Programs
 August 20, 2019

School groups (from pre-school to college), Boy and Girl Scouts, clubs and organizations, church groups, and family gatherings are invited to visit the planetarium. There is a group admission fee of \$72 per show (additional charge for full dome shows) and the planetarium can seat up to 64 visitors. Group programs may be scheduled during the school day, after school, evenings, weekends, and summer. Most programs last about an hour (shorter for very young children). Please allow additional time to use our Waiting Area or Gift Shop. For more information, call the planetarium at (219) 650-5486 or visit our web site at www.mcpstars.org.

We frequently update our programs – please call or email to check on the availability of any program in which you may be interested.

<i>program title</i>	<i>grade level</i>	<i>program description</i>	<i>teacher guide</i>
Introduction to the Planetarium	kdg & 1st	Introduces the planetarium and the day and night sky	yes
Wilbear's Adventure	kdg - 3rd	Wilbear is a teddy bear who learns about the history & science of flight	
How Do We Explore Space?	1st	Exploring space by using our eyes, telescopes, and spacecraft	yes
Earth Is a Planet	1st - 2nd	Earth as a planet: the atmosphere, water, land, and life	yes
Exploring the Sky	1st - 5th	Stars, planets, moon, constellations; earns badge for young scouts	
Larry Cat in Space	1st - adult	A family show about a cat that follows its owner to the moon	yes
Let It Snow	1st - adult	Favorite holiday songs and festive animation (<i>full dome show – additional fee</i>)	
The Sun and Earth	2nd	Stars; Earth orbits the sun; cause of day and night, seasons	yes
MoonWitch	2nd - adult	After hearing about a "MoonWitch", a young girl learns about the moon	
Current Sky and Solar System	3rd - adult	Constellations; sky motion; a trip to the North Pole; tour of the planets	yes
The Sun's Family	3rd - 4th	Covers the sun, planets, moons, asteroids, and comets	yes
The Moon	3rd - 4th	Basic information about the moon, phases, and eclipses	yes
Flying the Space Shuttle	3rd - 4th	How the shuttle works and what it does in space; historic missions	
Adventures Along the Spectrum	3rd - 5th	Professor Photon explains light and the electromagnetic spectrum	
The Water Planet	4th - 5th	The atmosphere, water, land, and life of Earth; basic geology	
Our Star, the Sun	4th - 5th	About stars and the sun; how the sun affects our planet	yes
Satellites and Space Probes	4th - 5th	Types of satellites; rockets; space probes sent to the planets	yes
Dawn of the Space Age	4th - adult	Historic moments from Sputnik to the Shuttle (<i>full dome show – additional fee</i>)	
Man and the Moon, part 1	5th - 6th	Information learned about the moon prior to spaceflight	yes
Man and the Moon, part 2	5th - 6th	New knowledge about the moon from lunar probes and astronauts	yes
The Inner Solar System	5th - 6th	Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and the asteroid belt	
The Outer Solar System	5th - 6th	Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, and comets	

continued

<i>program title</i>	<i>grade level</i>	<i>program description</i>	<i>teacher guide</i>
The Planets	5th - adult	From its formation to extrasolar planets, this program explores our solar system	
Destination: Mars!	5th - adult	Follow astronauts on a journey to explore Mars based on NASA plans	
RingWorld	5th - adult	The Cassini space probe explores Saturn, its rings, and its moons	
The Star Gazer	5th - adult	Astronomer James Kaler shares his knowledge and enthusiasm for stars	
Africa: Mysteries in Art	5th - adult	The art, history, and role of the sky in various cultures in Africa	
Art for All Time	5th - adult	Explore how humans have painted the beauty of the world throughout history	
Eclipse: Dance of Shadow and Light	6th - adult	Solar & lunar eclipses in history; cause of eclipses; safe viewing	
A Comet Called Halley	6th - adult	The history & science of comets; results of Halley's 1986 visit	
Comet: From Ice to Fire	6th - adult	Comets in history; the nature and study of comets; recent comets	
Learning About Stars	6th - adult	The winter sky; brightness, color, composition, and how stars evolve	
Galaxies and the Universe	6th - adult	The fall sky; the Milky Way & Andromeda Galaxies; types of galaxies	
Galaxies	6th - adult	A journey from our Milky Way "neighborhood" to the most distant galaxies	
Life Beyond Earth	6th - adult	How planets form & life begins; life elsewhere; methods of contact	yes
Exploring Our Universe	6th - adult	How humans' view of the universe has changed throughout history	
More Than Meets the Eye	6th - adult	Backyard astronomy: objects visible with eyes, binoculars, telescopes	
The Endless Horizon	6th - adult	Human exploration of the oceans, continents, and outer space	
The Wright Way to Fly	6th - adult	The story of human flight from Icarus to the Wright Brothers	
All Systems Go!	6th - adult	The history of NASA and America's space program from Sputnik to the shuttle	
Apollo 11: First Landing on the Moon	6th - adult	A detailed account of the first human landing on the moon in 1969	
Magellan: Report from Venus	7th - adult	Results from the Magellan probe which used radar to map Venus	
The Mars Show	7th - adult	Historic views, recent Mars probes, and future exploration	
The Voyager Encounters	7th - adult	The planets, moons, & rings of the outer solar system	
Cosmic Catastrophes	7th - adult	Causes of mass extinctions: supernovas, cosmic impacts, human effects	
The Life and Death of Stars	7th - adult	The evolution of stars as traced in the constellations of winter	
Mercury: America's First Men in Space	7th - adult	Early space race with the Soviet Union; flights of Shepard & Glenn	
Twins in Space: The Gemini Program	7th - adult	The Gemini Program tested spaceflight operations needed to land on the moon	
Van Gogh Sees the Stars	7th - adult	The life & art of Vincent Van Gogh; how Van Gogh was influenced by the sky	
Through the Eyes of Hubble	8th - adult	The discoveries made by Hubble since being successfully repaired	
The Days of the Dead	8th - adult	Traces the history & art of this Mexican festival from the ancient Aztecs to today	
The Dawn of Astronomy	8th - adult	Ancient astronomy; building and use of pyramids and Stonehenge	

Merrillville Community Planetarium

Planetarium Insight

August 29, 2019

In our mailing for the 2018-2019 school year, I noted the planetarium was celebrating its 45th anniversary. In this mailing, I thought that I would provide a little insight into how the planetarium works.

The planetarium was built and is operated by the Merrillville Community Schools. Although we are located inside of Clifford Pierce Middle School, we serve the entire school district. The Planetarium Director is employed as a teacher in the school system.

The planetarium's primary function is to provide astronomy and space education for Merrillville students. As our students go from kindergarten through eighth grade, they see more than two dozen planetarium programs. The programs prepare our students for state academic testing and for what informed citizens should know about space and astronomy.

We have more than 50 programs available to show. About half of those programs were written and produced here in our planetarium. The other half were produced by other planetariums or production companies and we purchased those programs or they were made available to us at little or no cost.

The planetarium is a special kind of a theater. What makes a planetarium special is the semi-spherical projection screen over the audience. When that domed ceiling is combined with a specialized projection system, the planetarium is capable of showing a simulated view of the day and night sky.

When the planetarium opened in 1973, we had a "star projector" in the center of our theater. Over the years, our technology has changed. Today, we have a digital projection system using six projectors around the dome and eight computers, allowing us to simulate the sky and to fly through our solar system and galaxy.

The Merrillville schools are the only K-12 school system in the northwest corner of the state to have a planetarium. Our school system has made the planetarium available to other schools and groups. Of course, Merrillville students get first priority and, while Merrillville students visit the planetarium for free, we charge a fee for other groups to visit the planetarium. We also offer programs for scouts, youth and church groups, and family gatherings (including birthday parties).

Finally, we offer shows for the public. We present four public programs each year: a fall show in October, a winter program in January, a spring show in April, and a summer program in July. Once again, we charge an admission fee to cover the cost of our public shows.

– Gregg L. Williams, Planetarium Director

Merrillville Community Planetarium
Mailing List Update
2019-2020 School Year

Help us keep our mailing list up-to-date and accurate. To continue receiving information about future programs, please complete and return this form by October 15, 2019. Thank you.

Return completed form to: **Mailing List**
 Merrillville Community Planetarium
 199 East 70th Avenue
 Merrillville, IN 46410

action (check one): _____ remove from mailing list
 _____ add to e-mailing list – here's my e-mail address:

(Please print. We will not share your e-mail address with other organizations.)

_____ keep on postal mailing list for another year using the address on the
 back of this paper
_____ keep on postal mailing list, but correct as noted below

address to (circle one): family individual

name: _____

address: _____

address: _____

city, state, zip: _____

We would like to know what you think of our planetarium and its programming. What do you like about our shows? What would you like to see changed or added? Please take a moment to write your comments in the space below.

Merrillville Community Planetarium
Clifford Pierce Middle School
199 East 70th Avenue
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Gary, IN
Permit No. 332

┌ ┌
└ └

Galaxies and the Universe
Spring Public Show

The Inner Solar System
Winter Public Show

The Autumn Sky
Fall Public Show

Merrillville Community Planetarium