

For Immediate Release: February 22, 2019
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Gemini Observatory Celebrates 15th Year of Journey Through the Universe

Local Students Engage with Scientists and Staff from the Maunakea Observatories and from Around the World!

Hilo, Hawai'i - Journey Through the Universe is celebrating 15 years of astronomy education on Hawai'i Island! With the support of local astronomy, business, and educational organizations, Gemini Observatory's flagship outreach program, Journey Through the Universe ("Journey") continues to expand. For its 15th year, Journey will visit over 300 classrooms, deliver more than 40 Starlab portable planetarium programs, 17 career panels for students, as well as teacher workshops, free public lectures and opportunities for everyone to celebrate science and exploration!

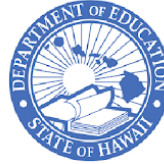
"The only way we can sustain a program of this magnitude and consistent impact on our students and teachers is our many partnerships," said Janice Harvey, Journey team leader at the Gemini Observatory. "We are so grateful to have the support of the Department of Education, our local business community, and our many volunteer astronomy educators and ambassadors," Harvey adds.

During Journey Week 2019, March 4 - 8, more than 80 astronomy educators will share their passion for exploration with over 8,000 local students at all grade levels. Thirteen schools from the Hilo-Waiākea complex area and four schools in North Hawai'i Island will participate. To prepare for these visits, 40 astronomy educators attended an educational workshop on February 1st. Hilo-Waiākea and Ka'ū-Kea'au-Pāhoa Complex Area Superintendent, Chad Farias opened the workshop with his vision for the future of East Hawai'i schools, growing STEM opportunities for students with Journey as a model.

"Journey Through the Universe is a stellar partnership between business organizations and the community. Our complex areas are overwhelmed with appreciation for the enthusiasm and energy this initiative has generated and sustained for our students, teachers, administrators and families. We humbly thank the community for their continued support as we all work together building a better future," Farias said.

Highlights for this year's Journey program will include:

On March 2nd and March 9th, NASA Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute (SSERVI) will host a free Lunar and Meteorite Sample Workshop for teachers at 'Imiloa Astronomy Center in Hilo and the Thelma



Parker Library in Waimea. This workshop certifies local teachers in handling and borrowing samples of the Moon, asteroids, and Mars to showcase in their classrooms.

On Monday, March 4th, the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce and Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Hawai'i will host the annual Journey celebration at the Hilo Yacht Club. This event allows astronomy professionals, the business community, and Department of Education to get to know each other (and say thank you) as we work toward the common goal of inspiring local students.

On Tuesday, March 5th, Journey is teaming up with the Hawai'i Science and Technology Museum, NASA SSERVI, and the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center to provide a Family Science Night for Big Island families with students in grades 4 - 8. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing, NASA SSERVI will be hosting touchable rock samples from both the Moon and Mars. The Hawai'i Science and Technology museum will be providing robots that students can build and drive on a large interactive Mars map, simulating Mars rovers.

On Wednesday, March 6th, the University of Hawai'i at Hilo will host a free lecture by Dr. Scott Fisher on recent discoveries made at Maunakea Observatories. Dr. Fisher is long-time volunteer for the Journey program and flies in nearly every year just for classroom visits. He is a professor at the University of Oregon and a former Gemini Observatory scientist.

Journey Through the Universe began as a five-year national program funded by NASA and directed by Jeff Goldstein. Despite the loss of federal funding one year later, Journey continued on Hawai'i Island thanks to the support of the local business community and the Department of Education. Since its first year when only five astronomy educators visited local classrooms, Journey has grown in myriad unexpected ways.

For more information on the Journey Through the Universe program and events throughout the year, visit: www.gemini.edu/journey

