

ASTROCAMP, LINKING ASTRONOMY AND LEADERSHIP IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. C. R. Milford¹, M. Dobsion², A. Tiso³, L. Kawano⁴, H. Chiu⁵, A. Rodriguez⁶ ¹P.O. Box 3399 Idyllwild, CA 92549 chrismilford@gmail.com, ²mdobson@guidediscoveries.org, ³atiso@guidediscoveries.org, ⁴lkawano@guidediscoveries.org, ⁵hchiu@guidediscoveries.org, ⁶arodriguez@guidediscoveries.org

Introduction: Since 1978, a unique hands-on science program has been changing the lives of children in Southern California. Guided Discoveries has focused on getting students excited about science and the environment, started from the philosophy that if kids can explore science for themselves through guidance from knowledgeable instructors, that they can make discoveries and become excited about learning.

Building upon the success of the Catalina Island Marine Institute (CIMI), Guided Discoveries started Astrocamp. Astrocamp, now located in Idyllwild, California, provides 5th through 9th grade students with an exciting astronomy based curriculum, infused with team building and leadership programs.

Astrocamp's main focus is on astronomy, with two observatories equipped with 11 Meade LX-200 telescopes, 9 Meade 10" Dobsonian telescopes, 45, 10x80mm astronomical binoculars, 2 CCD computerized telescopes, and 2 solar telescopes all of which are used daily and nightly by students to explore the sky.

Our staff is trained in 25 different classes in subjects ranging from astronomy, physics, remote sensing, high ropes challenge course, microgravity, planetary science, spacecraft engineering, geology, and use of our two planetariums. Each of our 30+ trained staff holds college degrees in science and teaching from accredited universities.

Astrocamp has a full year school program which groups of students can spend 3 or 5 days exploring science while living on our campus. We serve between 15 to 18 thousand kids a year. Additionally, the program has a full-fledged 1 to 2 week American Camp Association accredited summer camp program. We have seen a major change in the attitudes that kids have about science and learning and feel that this type of program can be a model to others wishing to give kids a meaningful experience in science in two columns that are each ~3 inches wide.

References: www.guidediscoveries.org