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Super Science Sunday will feature scientists, StarLab

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Marsha Ivins

Families will look to the stars during the Super Science Sunday celebration on March 22, a yearly event sponsored by the Discovery Center of Science and Technology.

This year's event is scheduled from 3 to 8 p.m. Sun., March 22 at the Goebel Senior Center and Thousand Oaks Teen Center on Janss Road off the 23 Freeway in Thousand Oaks.

To kick off the science festival, organizers have scheduled a free mini preview for Sat. and Sun., March 14 and 15 between 1 and 3 p.m. at The Oaks mall, in the children's play area by the food court.

A few of the hands-on exhibits will be displayed, and tickets for the March 22 event will be sold at the advance sale price.

The theme of this year's festival is "The Universe, Yours to Discover," said Discovery Center spokesperson Carrie Glicksteen. The local event coincides with a global celebration of the International Year of Astronomy.

"This year's Super Science Sunday event will be a once in a lifetime experience," Glicksteen said. "Where else in one day can you meet an astronaut and an astrophysicist plus experience what you weigh on another planet, guide a lunar lander and munch on an edible solar system? Our community partners have helped the Discovery Center create a wonderful event for families that has something for each age group."

The fifth annual space event will also be a birthday bash for Galileo's telescope, which turns 400 years old this year. The telescope was a pivotal technological breakthrough that brought the complexities of the universe down to earth, Glicksteen said.

Several special guests will be in attendance.

Astronaut Marsha Ivins will discuss "Space Exploration: Then, Now and in the Future." A veteran of five space flights, Ivins will also be available to answer questions and sign autographs, Glicksteen said.

Jane Houston Jones, a Jet Propulsion Laboratory Sr. Outreach Specialist will present "Exploring Saturn, the Cassini Program."

Astrophotographer Stephen J. Edberg will showcase his work through "Seeing the Sky, from Galileo to Hubble," while physicist Robert Piccioni will conduct a session called "Einstein Made Easy."

Ian McLean, an astrophysicist, professor and author, is slated to present "Discovering our Place in the Cosmos."

Other hands-on programs, demonstrations and simulations planned include the creation of a comet and a discussion on how space exploration directly impacts lives.

Shows in the StarLab inflatable planetarium will be conducted throughout the day, and children will have the chance to create an edible solar system, explore lunar craters and land their own spacecraft on the moon, Glicksteen said. Advanced computer simulations of space will be open for adult participants.

The Space Shuttle Cafe will be open during the event. Food will be served from an authentic DC 3 fuselage that resembles the Space Shuttle.

The Discovery Center of Science and Technology is a "museum without walls" that provides rich science programs to schools and the community. The center's mission is to create excitement about learning science in an environment that "promotes curiosity, exploration, discovery and creation."

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The cost for the March 22 Super Science Sunday event is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors, and children 4 and under can attend for free. Advance sales for groups of six or more will be \$5 per person.

For further information and advance ticket purchases, contact the Discovery Center of Science and Technology at (818) 8792021 or visit the website www.discoveryctr.org.