



SAINT LOUIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

ATTN: CALENDAR, NEWSROOM, OR PSA EDITOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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METRO ST. LOUIS AREA LIBRARIES PARTNER WITH ST. LOUIS ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY TO OFFER FREE TELESCOPE CHECK OUT PROGRAM

St. Louis, MO... The St. Louis City Public Library, St. Louis County, Kirkwood Public, and University City Libraries, are proud to announce an exciting partnership with the St. Louis Astronomical Society (SLAS). Beginning **November 10**, the **Library Telescope Program** will enable **patrons age eighteen-years or older** with a valid Library card to **check out a telescope** for seven days.

In one of the largest rollouts since the program's 2008 inception by Marc Stowbridge and the New Hampshire Astronomical Society, SLAS will provide a total of **seventeen Orion StarBlast 4.5" telescopes** to the participating St. Louis area library systems, **three of which will be donated by SLAS**. Each telescope is modified by SLAS to be more durable and patron friendly and is equipped with accessories to help library patrons explore the night sky: user's manual, constellation guide, Moon map, and night light. SLAS will provide the libraries with on-going educational support and telescope maintenance.

Throughout the year, St. Louis Public Library and St. Louis County Library Branches and the Kirkwood and University City Libraries will also host star parties – telescope viewing sessions where the public can gather to view the night skies through a number of telescopes operated by SLAS members.

St. Louis Astronomical Society President Jim Small notes "SLAS is excited to bring the library telescope program to the St. Louis area. The program will allow library patrons to enjoy their own experience of the night sky without the expense of purchasing a telescope. It is a great extension of the work we already do with star parties and other events for the St. Louis Science Center, Gateway Arch, YMCA and regional communities, schools and park systems."

This collaborative effort is a perfect match for the mission of public libraries—to provide learning resources and information services that support individual, family, and community life.

The St. Louis Astronomical Society is an organization for individuals interested in astronomy and telescopes. The public is invited to attend its meetings, telescope observing sessions, and special events. For more information about Astronomical Society events, please visit the website, www.slasonline.org , or call 314 – 962-9231.

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Associate Member, NASA Missouri Space Grant Consortium

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