



Events

Space Camp

Hightower Trail 4th Grade Class, Conyers, Georgia

March 9, 2007

3rd Annual SPACE CAMP at Hightower Trail Elementary (HTE), Conyers, GA.

For the 3rd year in a row, the 4th grade faculty of HTE asked the Charlie Elliott astronomers to be part of their very successful Space Camp. Steven Phillips (1st time), Jon Wood (2nd time), Debbie & Clevis Jones (3rd time) spent a delightful evening sharing the night sky with more than 100 4th grade students, some of their parents, the 4th grade faculty, and school volunteers.

Debbie Jones was given a classroom where she taught that the entire celestial sphere is mapped into areas (like states in the U.S.) that are called constellations. She showed maps of the sky and explained the connect-the-star stick figures are correctly called asterisms. She pointed out how some, like Orion, have the same name as the constellation they are in, while others others, like the Big Dipper, have names different from the constellations they are in. In addition she answered a ton of questions from the kids covering all sorts of astronomy topics. Debbie said the kids were "amazed" to find out the sky is mapped into areas.

The sky, having been overcast all day, began to clear as we arrived and forced us to switch from plan B (presentations indoors) back to plan A (observing). Not that we minded! Steven Phillips, Jon Wood, and Clevis Jones setup their telescopes. By the time the first of five groups came out to look at Saturn (an excellent view), the Orion Nebula, Pleiades, and other objects, the sky had completely cleared. It remained so for the other four groups. It was unbelievable how the sky cleared for Space Camp, letting everyone have a turn at each of the three telescopes and Steven's big binoculars, and then at the end, clouded over again.

As students, parents, and faculty got their first glimpse of Saturn - GASPS, and exclamations galore! Quick looks with a, "that's nice" were NOT heard tonight. Nearly

everyone kept glued to the eyepiece until they were reminded (some had to be reminded twice) that others wanted to look. Saturn and the other objects put on their best splendor for the Space Campers.

Thank you Ms. Bates (Principal), Gretchen Gault (our host) and her fellow 4th grade faculty, and the great 4th grade students and school volunteers for inviting the Charlie Elliot astronomers to your 3rd annual Space Camp. You gave us a wonderful time! It was our pleasure to share the night sky and our knowledge of astronomy with you. We look forward to next year! "Keep Looking Up!"

--Clevis Jones



Debbie Jones and a few of the happy 4th grade Space Campers



Jon Wood answers a pointed question while a young Space Camper takes a long look at Saturn through Jon's telescope.



It was really chilly, but this young man just kept intently gazing at Saturn through Steven

Phillip's delightful 100mm binoculars.



It looks like Jon Wood just heard a "WOW!".



Debbie Jones shows maps of the U.S. and the celestial sphere while explaining the difference between constellations and asterisms.

Thanks to Ms. Bates (Principal), Gretchen Gault (our host) and the 4th grade faculty for inviting us!

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