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The Adler's Far Horizons Marks 10th Anniversary with 100th Launch

Far Horizon Stratonauts Design Experiments, Launch Them into Space!

CHICAGO – October 24, 2016 –The Adler Planetarium's *Far Horizons* program (www.adlerplanetarium.org/education/far-horizons/) is celebrating its 10th anniversary on October 29, with its 100th high-altitude balloon mission.

This high-altitude balloon mission will include student-designed experiments as well as training opportunities for teachers and faculty from science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) enrichment programs. The primary experiments will feature test systems for *Far Horizons*' 2017 eclipse mission which will include a live-video transmission system and two-way communication system to document the August 21, 2017, total solar eclipse from the stratosphere.

"*Far Horizons*' goal is to bring real space exploration down to Earth and into the hands of students, volunteers, and the public," said Ken Walczak, *Far Horizons* project manager. "For 10 years, we have designed and built experiments with participants of all ages and sent their designs to the stratosphere. Our goal is to mentor, experiment, design, launch, and explore."

For this 100th launch, experiments will come from students at WW. Walker Elementary School, Bedford Park, IL and Hilda Walker Intermediate School, Tinley Park, IL. A student team from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign/Illinois Space Grant Consortium, students and faculty from University of Chicago and Northwestern University as well as a group of Chicago middle school teachers, accompanied by Bernhard Beck-Winchatz, associate professor at DePaul University (STEM studies and physics), will also attend to gain high-altitude balloon mission experience. The launches will be facilitated by Team Stratonauts—a group of Chicago high school teens participating in *Far Horizons'* current science-intensive program.

Started in 2006 as the brainchild of Adler Planetarium astronomers Dr. Geza Gyuk and Dr. Mark Hammergren, *Far Horizons* leverages high-altitude balloon missions to facilitate hands-on science and engineering experiences at the edge of space. Since its humble beginning, the program has taken off launching nearly 100 stratospheric missions with hundreds of experiments designed and built by students, volunteers, and researchers, engaging hundreds of participants every year in nearly a dozen programs, and positioning *Far Horizons* as a leader in high-altitude balloon missions.

"The *Far Horizons* program provides such a unique opportunity," says Gyuk. "Above all, it demonstrates to students and teachers that you don't have to be a rocket scientist to explore space."

Far Horizons missions typically launch within 70 miles south of downtown Chicago between 11 am–12 pm. A typical flight takes approximately two hours. To follow live, go to aprs.fi and enter KC9LHW-11 or WB9SKY-11 in the "Track Callsign" box during the flight. By mousing over any of the points along the flight, you can see the altitude, velocity and direction of our payload. Because all *Far Horizons* events are weather-permitting, the Adler utilizes Twitter @AdlerPlanet and #FarHorizons to provide updates on event details and flight information in real-time.

The Adler Planetarium is an authorized ISBE professional development provider and as such it offers *Far Horizons* programs as professional development experiences for educators on specific science and engineering topics. For more information on high-altitude balloon launches with *Far Horizons* or other professional

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development opportunities at the Adler, please visit: http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/education/professional-development/.

The Adler's Teen Programs focus on providing technical and professional skills, mentorship, and a welcoming learning environment for Chicago high school students of all backgrounds, interests, and abilities. We offer internships, workshops, after-school programs, and more. Whether you're building a website, programming a robot, blogging about current space science, or facilitating a workshop for other teens, you'll make an impact here! For more information about our teen opportunities or to see some of our upcoming events, visit: http://www.adlerplanetarium.org/teen-opportunities/.

Recognition
The Adler Planetarium is grateful to the Peggy and Steve Fossett Foundation and Bears Care for their ongoing support of Far Horizons*.*

About the Adler Planetarium
The Adler Planetarium—America's First Planetarium—is more than a museum; it is a laboratory, a classroom, and a community exploring the Universe together. Each year, more than 550,000 visitors experience the museum's interactive exhibitions, live planetarium shows, hands-on, minds-on STEM education programs, and world-class collections. Founded in 1930 by Chicago business leader Max Adler, the Adler Planetarium is a recognized leader in public engagement. The museum's scientists, historians, and educators inspire the next generation of explorers and invite you to explore space with us.

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