

**The Adler Planetarium Continues to Expand Outreach Efforts
to the Chicago Community and Beyond
Resulting in Record Engagement for the Third Year in a Row**

CHICAGO—February 1, 2018—In 2017, 636,008 guests explored the Universe with the Adler Planetarium who brought space science and STEM education to even more communities throughout Illinois. Attendance increased by more than 10%, resulting in another record year.

This outcome is due in part to the Adler's ongoing commitment to reach more guests beyond the museum walls with events like the *Kavli Fulldome Lecture Series*, and public observing programs like *'Scopes in the City* and *Galaxy Ride*, as well as outreach around last year's total solar eclipse. In 2017, the Adler appointed Michelle Nichols, a 22-year veteran of the institution, to the newly formed Director of Public Observing position, to reinforce that commitment to public engagement. In her role, Ms. Nichols spearheads all Adler public observing activities, and is tasked with helping the Adler reach underserved communities through programs at schools, libraries, parks, and other public locations throughout Illinois.

"Our goal is to connect people to the sky, and expand the walls of the Planetarium out to the community. We want everyone to look up with us," said Michelle Nichols. "

In early 2017, the Adler received an anonymous one million dollar gift that is helping the institution expand its *'Scopes in the City* program where Adler astronomers and staff lead free telescope observing sessions for more than 2,000 people in Chicago and suburban neighborhoods. Many *'Scopes in the City* participants have never had the opportunity to look through a telescope before, so it's an opportunity for the Adler to introduce the Universe to them.

In August, the Adler's *Galaxy Ride* team, comprised of astronomers and educators, drove more than 1,000 miles, interacted with more than 2,300 people, and facilitated over 80 educational programs across Southern Illinois to prepare people for the total solar eclipse on August 21. Nearly every program was open to the public, and most were free of charge. *Galaxy Ride* was established in 2015 as a science roadshow to help the Adler's STEM education programs reach more people.

On August 21, 2017, the Adler recorded its highest single day engagement numbers in the institution's history when approximately 60,000 people came to #Lookup with us at the museum during our *Chicago Eclipse Fest* celebration. The event, as well as admission to the Planetarium, was free and open to everyone that day. In the months before, the Adler equipped over 250,000 people throughout Illinois with free safe solar viewing glasses via schools, public libraries, and partnerships for those who normally would not have access to the institution. In the end, the Adler prepared more than 500,000 people throughout Chicagoland and beyond to safely join us in witnessing this historical eclipse wherever they were located.

In November, the Adler hosted its fourth *Kavli Fulldome Lecture*—a lecture series presented by The Kavli Foundation—that combines cutting-edge research from leading scholars with stunning visualizations on the Planetarium dome. This year, the lecture was domestic live to 16 partner institutions across the world. Audiences as far away as Ghana, Kenya, and New Zealand, and

as close as the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago were able to watch the lecture from their own locations either at their local institutions or via virtual reality headsets provided by the Adler.

"We have a great gift in that our arena is the entire Universe, with all the wonder and discovery it invites," said Adler Planetarium President and CEO Dr. Michelle B. Larson. "By engaging communities where they are, the Adler connects with people under the sky we share, and sparks a curiosity that empowers further engagement."

For more information about all of our programs at the Adler and beyond, please visit: adlerplanetarium.org.

VIDEO FOOTAGE:

Adler Planetarium b-roll: <https://vimeo.com/149789386>

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, over 570,000 guests 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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