

2025 Spring Show Descriptions

SKY SHOW PRAIRIE SKIES

A live-narrated tour of the wonders of tonight's sky, accompanied by some of the legendary stories of the ancient sky. Find out what constellations and planets are visible tonight from your backyard. This show is updated seasonally and is intended for all ages.

MAIN FEATURES

5000 EYES

The Dark Energy Spectroscopic Instrument (DESI) is creating the most detailed map of our nearby Universe. Installed on the Mayall Telescope on Kitt Peak in Southern Arizona, DESI's 5000 independently operated robots can measure the light from thousands of galaxies at once. Join us as we explore the science, instrument, and people behind this global endeavor.

SKYWATCHERS OF AFRICA

Originally produced by the Adler Planetarium in Chicago, Skywatchers of Africa is a celebration of many diverse African cultures and their observations and explanations of the yearly cycles of the heavens. Africa has many vibrant cultures thriving today, as well as countless past civilizations that continue to speak to us through their sky lore across time.

BIG ASTRONOMY: PEOPLE, PLACES, DISCOVERIES

It takes many people with diverse backgrounds, talents, and skills to run a world-class observatory. Meet a few of these people as they share the wonder of the sky and the excitement of discovery. Explore the world-class observatories nestled in northern Chile's mountains and learn why Chile, with its beautiful mountain ranges and clear, cloudless skies, create an ideal environment for studying the cosmos.

EXPEDITION REEF

Learn the secrets of the "rainforests of the sea" as you embark on an oceanic safari of the world's most vibrant—and endangered—marine ecosystems. Along the way, discover how corals grow, feed, reproduce, and support over 25% of all marine life on Earth—while facing unprecedented threats from climate change, habitat destruction, and overfishing. Produced by the California Academy of Sciences, narrated by Lea Salonga, and licensed thanks to support from the Friends of the Staerke Planetarium.

SUNSTRUCK

The Sun is humanity's star! But what is it made of and how does it shine? Travel back to the beginning of the solar system and experience the birth of the Sun. Discover how it came to support life, how it also threatens life as we know it, and how its energy will one day fade away. Produced by the Michigan Science Center and NASA.

CHILDREN'S FEATURES

FLIGHT ADVENTURES

Discover the science of flight through the eyes of a young girl and her grandfather as they explore how birds, kites, planes, and models fly. Learn about the history and future of flight and how NASA is

discovering new and safer ways to travel with the help of future engineers and aviators—like you!

IN MY BACKYARD

Let's explore the night sky from our own backyards! Through use of storytelling, poetry, and songs, children are encouraged to participate in the show while learning about the seasons, Ursa Major, planets, meteors, and the Moon. Narrated by Fred Penner.

SOLAR SYSTEM SAFARI

A jungle adventurer uses a magical camera to take visitors on an exciting safari through the Solar System. The Sun, Moon, planets, and dwarf planets come to life, taking on unique personalities and describing their own characteristics and eccentricities. Learn about the planets all the way out to Pluto and the Kuiper Belt.

BEYOND THE SUN

Celeste is a little girl who is visited by a friendly particle of light called Moon just before going to sleep. In a dreamlike state, they enjoy a journey through the Universe. They observe rogue planets, oceanic worlds, and super-Earths. Moon tells her about exoplanet hunters, who observe the sky in search of planets like Earth. This program was licensed thanks to support from the Friends of the Staerke Planetarium.

SPECIAL EVENTS

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Matinées play during the holidays on February 17, April 18, and during spring break on March 20. Shows will not be held on March 21 and March 22 for spring break.

JAMES B. KALER SCIENCE LECTURE SERIES

On the first Friday of the month at 7 p.m., the Staerke Planetarium becomes a forum for a local scientist to discuss their specialties. The series was named for UIUC astronomer Jim Kaler, who gave his time to speak in our series every year for almost 30 years. Admission is \$2 for everyone.

SENSORY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

The Staerke Planetarium offers matinee shows with sensory-friendly settings on selected Saturdays. Sensory-friendly shows have "lights up, sound down" settings and a relaxed atmosphere where patrons can come, go, and move around as needed. Sensory-friendly shows are great for guests with autism spectrum disorder, sensory sensitivities, or young children. All are welcome, even if you don't need sensory accommodations!

SPANISH LANGUAGE SHOWS

On January 25, we will show Un Cielo, un Mundo: La Aventura de Big Bird at 3:30 p.m. and Astronomía a Gran Escala at 4:30 p.m. Both shows are presented by a native Spanish speaker.

El 25 de enero tendremos el show Un Cielo, un Mundo: La Aventura de Big Bird, a las 3:30 p.m.; y Astronomía a Gran Escala a las 4:30 p.m. Ambos shows serán presentados por un hispano hablante nativo.

SEE THE REAL SKY WITH TELESCOPES

The CU Astronomical Society hosts free observatory open houses which occur (weather permitting) at dusk on March 8, April 5, and May 3. See the club's website at cuas.org for directions, details, and additional events.

EVENT PRICES

	One Show	Two Shows*	Science Lectures
Adults	\$ 8.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 2.00
Parkland students, seniors, & children under 12	7.00	10.50	2.00
Groups (20+)	4.00	6.00	2.00
Light/Laser shows (all ages)	12.00		
FOSP Members	FREE	FREE	FREE

**Attend two consecutive shows at a reduced rate.*

Reservations are not accepted unless there are 20 or more in your party. The planetarium may be rented for private showings starting at \$350. Call 217/351-2568 for group show information.

ADMISSION RATES AND POLICIES

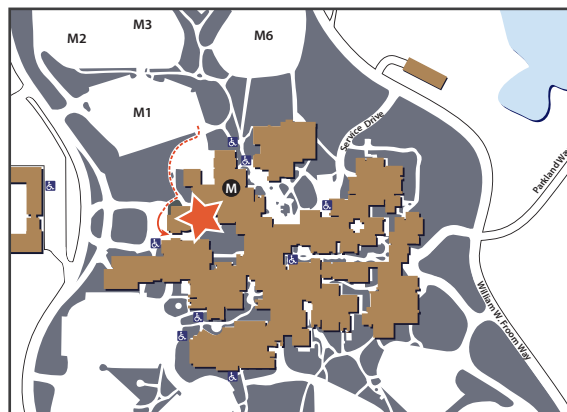
Tickets may be purchased at tickets.parkland.edu in advance or 30 minutes before each show at the door.

KIDS, look for details on our website on how to become a Galaxy Club member!

TEACHERS, book your field trip with us by calling our office at 217/351-2568. Teaching materials and show descriptions can be found online.

WANT TO TAKE HOME A TELESCOPE? You can rent one from the planetarium! Call or email our office to learn more.

SPONSOR A CHAIR! Interested in sponsoring one of the planetarium chairs? See our website for this opportunity.



- The William M. Staerke Planetarium is fully accessible, including wheelchair seating in the dome. Accessible parking is available.
- The closest parking is in lot M1 north of the dome.

spring 2025



WILLIAM M. STAERKEL PLANETARIUM

SPRING SCHEDULE 2025

Show openings are in **bold**.

JANUARY

FRI 10

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. 5000 Eyes

SAT 11

1 p.m. Flight Adventures
2 p.m. 5000 Eyes

SENSORY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

3:30 p.m. In My Backyard
4:30 p.m. Flight Adventures

FRI 17

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. 5000 Eyes

SAT 18

1 p.m. Flight Adventures
2 p.m. 5000 Eyes

FRI 24

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. 5000 Eyes

SAT 25

1 p.m. Flight Adventures
2 p.m. 5000 Eyes

SPANISH LANGUAGE MATINÉES

3:30 p.m. **Un Cielo, un Mundo:**
La Aventura de Big Bird
4:30 p.m. **Astronomía a Gran Escala**

FRI 31

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. 5000 Eyes

FEBRUARY

SAT 1

1 p.m. Flight Adventures
2 p.m. 5000 Eyes

FRI 7

7 p.m. Kaler Science Lecture
8 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

SAT 8

1 p.m. In My Backyard
2 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

FRI 14

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

SAT 15

1 p.m. In My Backyard
2 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

MON 17 – PRESIDENTS DAY MATINÉES

1 p.m. In My Backyard
2 p.m. Sunstruck

FRI 21

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

SAT 22

1 p.m. In My Backyard
2 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

FRI 28

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

MARCH

SAT 1

1 p.m. In My Backyard
2 p.m. Skywatchers of Africa

FRI 7

7 p.m. Kaler Science Lecture
8 p.m. Big Astronomy

SAT 8

1 p.m. Solar System Safari
2 p.m. Big Astronomy

SENSORY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMS

3:30 p.m. Beyond the Sun
4:30 p.m. Solar System Safari

FRI 14

7 p.m. Winter Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Big Astronomy

SAT 15

1 p.m. Solar System Safari
2 p.m. Big Astronomy

THU 20 – SPRING BREAK MATINÉES

1 p.m. Solar System Safari
2 p.m. Sunstruck

FRI 21 & SAT 22 – CLOSED FOR SPRING BREAK

FRI 28

7 p.m. Spring Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Big Astronomy

SAT 29

1 p.m. Solar System Safari
2 p.m. Big Astronomy

APRIL

FRI 4

7 p.m. Kaler Science Lecture
8 p.m. Expedition Reef

SAT 5

1 p.m. Beyond the Sun
2 p.m. Expedition Reef

FRI 11

7 p.m. Spring Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Expedition Reef

SAT 12

1 p.m. Beyond the Sun
2 p.m. Expedition Reef

FRI 18 – HOLIDAY MATINÉES

1 p.m. Beyond the Sun
2 p.m. Sunstruck

7 p.m. Spring Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Expedition Reef

SAT 19

1 p.m. Beyond the Sun
2 p.m. Expedition Reef

FRI 25

7 p.m. Spring Prairie Skies
8 p.m. Expedition Reef

SAT 26

1 p.m. Beyond the Sun
2 p.m. Expedition Reef

For show information or other inquiries:

Phone: 217/351-2446

planetarium@parkland.edu

parkland.edu/planetarium

Become a member of the Friends of Staerkel Planetarium. Obtain free show admissions, invitations to special events, and more!



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