

Stockton Astronomical Society

2024 Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program



We began giving telescopes to grade-school students in our area in 2012. Our program went into hibernation with the advent of the COVID epidemic, but it is time to resume, as conditions allow.

We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We hope to strike some sparks of interest, in astronomy, by providing telescopes and mentoring, to open up the Universe to young minds.

Our program is based on the program of the same name run by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. They have given away hundreds of telescopes over the past three decades. Some of those recipients are now professional astronomers and astrophysicists. Some have maintained a lifelong hobby interest in astronomy. Sparks were struck and fires were lit. We looked at their program and asked, “Why aren’t we doing that?” Now, we are. One of our first awardees is now working towards her Ph.D. in Astronomy at UCLA!

We will award the contest winners with new, easy-to-use, reflecting (6-inch mirror), Dobsonian-mount telescopes.

The contest is open to students in grades 3–12 who are either in San Joaquin County, or live in an area with an active Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS) mentor. Nominations will be accepted from San Joaquin County teachers or from SAS members.

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1 Teachers and Nominators

- Select and nominate up to 2 students who have demonstrated genuine interest in science and astronomy. Consider whether or not the student will have parent/guardian support to participate in astronomy events.
- Make copies of page 4 for your nominee(s), and pages 5–8, for parent(s) and guardian(s), along with the event and attendance forms and send home with each nominated student.
- Fill out one nomination form (page 3) for each student you nominate.
- After you have received an essay from each student you nominated, carefully read each student's essay and then compose a required supporting statement and attach it to the Nomination Form (Page 3). Try to be specific as to how a telescope might 'Spark' the student's interest in astronomy. 'Spark' nominations without a teacher's supporting statement will not be judged.
- For each nominated student send:
 1. SAS Striking Sparks Nomination Form (page 3).
 2. Student's signed entry essay.
 3. Student's attendance verification (page 8).
 4. Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

SAS, Striking Sparks Telescope Contest
P.O. Box 243
Stockton, CA 95201

Or scan the materials to form a pdf file and email to treasurer@stocktonastro.org

All contest entries must be:

- postmarked no later than Monday, April 22, 2024.
- OR converted to a pdf file and emailed no later than April 25, 2024.

We will contact the winning students and teachers at home on or after Saturday, May 4, 2024. The telescopes will be presented to the contest winners during the Stockton Astronomical Society's Spring Potluck, at Oak Grove Park, from 3-11 PM (you don't have to stay the whole time), on National Astronomy Day, May 18, 2024.

Questions? We are eager to hear from you.

Jerry Hyatt (209) 244-0004 Email: treasurer@stocktonastro.org (Striking Sparks Coordinator)

Eric Holland (209) 351-0206 Email: secretary@stocktonastro.org (SAS Secretary)

Jeff Baldwin (209) 594-1894 Email: baldjb@comcast.net (Amateur Astronomer Extraordinaire)

Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program 2024 Nomination Form

Teachers, please complete:

Student's Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____ Grade level: _____ Age: _____

Email Address (required) _____

Parents/Guardians first and last names: _____

School: _____

Teacher: _____ Principal: _____

Teacher's Telephone(s): _____

Teacher's Email Address: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Please staple (or scan) all parts together securely in this order for each student:

1. SAS Striking Sparks Nomination Form (page 3).
2. Student's signed entry essay.
3. Student's attendance verification (page 8).
4. Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

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Due dates are listed on the previous page.

2 Students

- Attend two or more SAS events (some are listed on page 8), between now and April 21, 2024. Visit stocktonastro.org for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.
- Write an essay, up to 150 words, that describes your interest in astronomy and how having your own telescope will support that interest. Here are some questions you may consider when writing your essay:
 - When did you become interested in astronomy?
 - What have you done to learn about astronomy?
 - Where would you use a telescope if you win one?
 - Are other members of your family interested in astronomy?
 - Have you ever looked through a telescope?
 - Describe any astronomy project you have completed.
 - Describe what you learned or experienced at an SAS event.
 - The essay is to be in your own words. It may be handwritten or typed.
- Return your essay and your Attendance Verification Form (page 8) to your teacher. Your teacher will need ample time to complete your application, so don't wait until the deadline.

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Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program

Parent/Guardian Information

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We began giving telescopes to grade-school students in our area in 2012. Our program went into hibernation with the advent of the COVID epidemic, but it is time to resume, as conditions allow.

We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We hope to strike some sparks of interest, in astronomy, by providing telescopes and mentoring, to open up the Universe to young minds.

Our program is based on the program of the same name run by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. They have given away hundreds of telescopes over the past three decades. Some of those recipients are now professional astronomers and astrophysicists. Some have maintained a lifelong hobby interest in astronomy. Sparks were struck and fires were lit. We looked at their program and asked, "Why aren't we doing that?" Now we are.

We will purchase new 6-inch Newtonian Reflecting Telescopes and present them to students who are the winners in our Striking Sparks Telescope Contest. These are quality entry level telescopes. The optical tube is 6.5" in diameter and 46" long and mounts on an easy-to-use Dobsonian mount. Total assembled weight is 34.4 pounds. The telescopes are financially sponsored by interested individuals or businesses.

Along with the telescope, each winning student receives a one-year family membership in the Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS). Students should participate in the SAS meetings, star parties, or other special events where they will receive telescope instructions and learn more about astronomy.

Contest Procedure

1. Teachers will nominate students who have demonstrated genuine interest in science and astronomy, and who have the support of their parents/guardians in their studies.
2. **Students will complete the following tasks:**
 - Attend two or more SAS events (some are listed on page 8), between now and April 21, 2024. Parents and guardians are urged to join their children (and other siblings) at these events.
 - Write an essay, up to 150 words, that describes your interest in astronomy and how having your own telescope will support that interest. Here are some questions for students to consider when writing their essay:
 - When did you become interested in astronomy?
 - What have you done to learn about astronomy?
 - Where would you use a telescope if you win one?
 - Are other members of your family interested in astronomy?
 - Have you ever looked through a telescope?
 - Describe any astronomy project you have completed.
 - Describe what you learned or experienced at an SAS event.

The essay is to be in your own words. It may be handwritten or typed. Visit stocktonastro.org for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.

- Return your essay and your Attendance Verification Form (page 8) to your teacher. Your teacher will need ample time to complete your application, so don't wait until the deadline.
3. The teacher will then write a supporting statement, assemble the entry packet, and return it to the SAS.

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Upcoming Astronomy Events

Date	Event	Location
Sept 14	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Oct 7	Highway 4 Star Party	Shirley Road
Oct 12	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Oct 21	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Nov 4	Highway 4 Star Party	Shirley Road
Nov 9	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Nov 18	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Dec 9	Highway 4 Star Party	Shirley Road
Dec 14	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Dec 16	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Jan 11	SAS Annual Banquet	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Feb 8	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Mar 14	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Apr 11	SAS General Meeting	Harmony Grove Lab Room, Wentworth Education Center SJCOE 2707 Transworld Dr. Stockton
Apr 22	Mailing Deadline for Striking Sparks Application <i>Or email a pdf by April 25.</i>	
May 18	Astronomy in the Park/Striking Sparks Celebration Oak Grove Park	

This is not a complete list. For more upcoming events, check the Calendar page at stocktonastro.org.

General Meetings are usually available to attend through Zoom using the link: <http://tiny.cc/stocktonastro>.

Attendance Verification Form

(submit with application)

Students who enter the contest must attend at least two SAS events (some are listed on the back page) between now and April 21, 2024. The Attendance Verification Form is to be signed by an SAS Board Member, or appropriate event leader, while attending the event. Enclose the signed Attendance Form with the Striking Sparks application.

Check the SAS website (stocktonastro.org) for information about upcoming events.

Event: _____ Date: _____

SAS Board Member: _____

Event: _____ Date: _____

SAS Board Member: _____

Event: _____ Date: _____

SAS Board Member: _____

Event: _____ Date: _____

SAS Board Member: _____