Dear Space Grant Directors,

As requested at the Fall Space Grant Directors’ Meeting, attached is the most current list of teachers using StarDate and Universo CDs in the classroom nationally. We are seeking funds totaling $100 per teacher to make the program available to those K-12 teachers in your state.

The StarDate/Universo CDs in the classroom program has previously been supported by the NSF, the National Space Grant, and American Honda Foundation. It is now on a declining grant, which is the norm for educational outreach programs following seed funding. Please consider full or partial support of this program for your state.

In order to receive the CDs, the teachers on this list must have completed an evaluation form for 1997-98 programs and have indicated an interest in using the program during 1998-99. Teachers can also receive the CDs by writing to us on their school stationary and indicating their desire to use the program in the classroom. We update the mailing list at the beginning of each school year to insure that the CDs are being mailed only to those teachers who are using them.

Teachers receive a total of ten CDs during the year, one for each month for the period September through May plus the Hispanic Heritage Month CD. They receive at least one poster per year, a teacher guide, a guide to the Solar System, and six issues of the StarDate magazine. All materials align with the National Standards for Science Education.

We evaluate this program each year by sending a survey to the teachers in April. The results of the survey are available by the end of the summer and can be useful in understanding and reporting the impact of your educational/public outreach work. For example, past surveys indicate that each teacher provides an average of 100 students with exposure to the program.

You can begin to support the CDs to the teachers in your state at any time during the year. We can label the monthly CDs with your Space Grant’s name, logo, web site, telephone number, and special announcements and opportunities--and thereby begin to develop a strong relationship with a network of teachers. (And, as I mentioned at the meeting, this program has not been advertised and we can add any teachers that you would like to the list.)

I hope you will support this program. Sample comments from teachers who used the program last year and completed the survey are listed below. Please feel free to call me (512 475-6765) or email me (sandi@astro.as.utexas.edu) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

Sandi
StarDate is awesome! Comments I received from my students were: “I saw Jupiter last night and I showed my mom. She asked me how I knew this. I told her we learned this from class (StarDate).” My students really enjoyed this. We had GREAT discussions and also jump off for Language Arts/Science projects! Thank you!
--Mary L. Brown, Christensen Elementary, 5-8, Flagstaff AZ

I used the program to get my students excited about astronomy. We also listened to the CD on a weekly basis during “Noticias de la Semana.” The students wrote their observations in their journals. I really appreciate receiving materials in Spanish. Thank you.
--Leticia Montes, Euclid Elementary, K-4, Ontario, CA

StarDate was used in my astronomy classroom at the beginning of each period to stimulate discussion and to encourage students to observe the skies for themselves. It was also used in my adult education class in the same manner. StarDate was also used as a public resource. Daily, I transcribe the program to our “Astronomy Hotline” number. We received many calls per day from people wanting to hear the information provided. We linked the StarDate web site to our web site and informed browsers they could hear the program at 860-887-2505 ext. 459.
--Robert Ochs, Norwish Free Academy, 9-12, Norwich CT

Each week, usually on Monday or Tuesday, we listen to the next few days “lessons.” Occasionally we review what has been covered. I supplement the lessons with posters and occasional lessons from Ranger Rick, Spica, Universe at your Fingertips, and Earth, Moon, Stars. I have also demonstrated StarDate to 6 workshops.
--William L. Horton, Dennis School, 5-8, Decatur IL

I used StarDate on a regular basis. It served as an opener for class. Throughout the year it enabled me to open discussions about space and space exploration. I used it mainly as a passive learning tool. However, this spring when I started my Astronomy units I was impressed by the amount of information many students had retained.
--Julie Robin, Chalmette High School, 9-12, Chalmette LA

The University of North Caroline at Chapel Hill Mathematics and Science Education Network Pre-College Program meets 12-15 Saturdays on campus to provide enrichment in math and science for students in grades 6-12. StarDate material allowed us to provide enrichment in Astronomy with a very excellent resource--StarDate. We have 17 schools that offer an in-school class for middle school students (6-8) and an after-school club for high school students (9-12). The schools were allowed to use the audio programs on CD to assist in the curriculum topics discussed at their local level. We enjoyed the materials and appreciate the service that the UT-Austin is providing for our students.
--Eric Packenham, UNC Chapel Hill, Chapel NC

My third graders used StarDate for their astronomy unit. The pamphlet enriched the kids to an extent that they did extra work at home! What a super program. Thanks.
--Jan Guzzetta, Huth Road, K-4, N. Tonawanda NY