

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Bring Us the Stars at FFES



Pictured Left to Right: Ms. Shelby Allison, Kristen Applebaum, Principal Margie Parker, Italo Escobar Cortez, Brianna Phillips, Logan Saunders, Madison Beaver, Kayla Butner, and Sara Parsons

First Flight Elementary School (FFES) 3rd Grade students get ready to enter the PLANETS Portable Planetarium, the first full dome traveling planetarium in North Carolina. PLANETS (Portable Learning for All North Carolina Elementary Teachers and Students) is a program of the UNC Morehead Planetarium and Science Center. The Dare Education Foundation recently awarded a 21st Century Skills Grant in the amount of \$650.00 to FFES 3rd Grade Teacher Chavaleh Wetzel. The grant provided funds to bring the traveling planetarium to FFES.

On May 12, FFES 3rd Grade students stepped from their regular classroom setting directly into the portable planetarium to discover the secrets of science and astronomy. The project is called Bring Us the Stars, and that it did! The planetarium was set up in the school gymnasium and brought the unique educational experience of a traditional planetarium show without the added cost of out-of-town travel and instructional time. The entertaining and thought provoking planetarium experience lasted about an hour and as students emerged from the dome they gave it an enthusiastic “two thumbs up”.

“The portable planetarium is a perfect example of how Dare County Schools’ Teachers are using their own ingenuity to teach students to think outside the box. Thinking beyond the way things have always been done, Ms. Wetzel found this amazing opportunity for students to experience a planetarium right in their own school. In these tight budget times, I am pleased that teachers are pulling on the resources of the Dare Education Foundation to continue to enhance student experiences and leverage the expert resources of a program like UNC’s PLANET right here in Dare County,” said Amy Montgomery, DEF’s Executive Director.

PLANETS is supported by a N.C. Space Grant. Additional funding comes from the Chatham Foundation and the University of North Carolina Provost Office.

For more information about the Dare Education Foundation and the 21st Century Skills Grant Program, visit dareeducationfoundation.org or call 255-5545.

The Dare Education Foundation (DEF) is an IRS-qualified non-profit organization that works in partnership with Dare County Schools to promote excellence in education. DEF believes that the best education possible for every student provides a solid foundation for a strong and vibrant quality of life in Dare County. In order to achieve this, DEF partners with the community and raises funds from private donations large and small, grants, sponsorships, and special events. DEF's collaborative efforts enrich education for all students and encourage community involvement in education.