

ASTRONOMY FOUNDATIONS THROUGH ART & PAPER PLATES (AFTAPP)

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Abstract: The poster exhibited at the 2001 SEPA-GLPA Conference introduced *Astronomy Foundations Through Art & Paper Plates (AFTAPP)*; the *Paper Plate Education* website at <http://analyzer.depaul.edu/paperplate>; and the *Paper Plate Astronomy* videotape. The AFTAPP workshops will fuse multicultural storytelling with recent astronomical discoveries to generate modern interpretations of the constellations through artistic renderings and paper plate activities.

The poster exhibited at the 2001 SEPA-GLPA Conference introduced Astronomy Foundations Through Art & Paper Plates (AFTAPP), a coalition of space scientists, educators and artists who intend to provide inner-city students with the tools and framework to study science, culture and modern astronomical discoveries in a holistic manner. AFTAPP will create multi-disciplinary teaching aids that engage diverse populations, including those with limited access to technology or financial resources, and will expand on an initiative of the GLPA that promotes the creative use of paper plates as instructional materials.

The start-up program, funded by an IDEAS grant, consists primarily of three or more teacher workshops with an emphasis on observing and learning the night sky from an urban location. The workshop hosts will first model the motion of the Earth around the Sun to illustrate the seasonal stars, the circumpolar stars, and the stars of the zodiac. This model will be reinforced by a session in a portable planetarium.

In a second workshop at the African American Museum in Cleveland, the teachers will learn interpretations of the star patterns as told by both Western and African cultures. A NASA astronomer will then incorporate recent astronomical discoveries into our understanding of popular star groupings. After observing the constellations in the night sky, the teachers will be challenged to come up with their own expression of the constellations, a fusing of the old lore and the current scientific understanding.

In the third workshop, teachers will work with the Museum's resident artist to make kiln-baked clay tiles that depict new representations of the zodiacal constellations. The tiles will become part of a larger piece of astronomical art that is being proposed for installation in the Cleveland area.

Related paper plate activities will supplement the lessons the teachers take back to their classrooms. The IDEAS funding supports the new *Paper Plate Education* website at <http://analyzer.depaul.edu/paperplate>, which debuted at the conference. Additionally, participating teachers will receive a copy of the GLPA's *Paper Plate Astronomy* videotape, which demonstrates the construction and use of about 10 technical paper plate designs. At the conference, free copies of the videotape were distributed to GLPA members as part of a PLATO grant.

AFTAPP participants will take their experience and the material back to their respective classrooms, where its efficacy will be professionally evaluated. We welcome input that will strengthen the proposed program for the benefit of the teachers and students alike.