

# Stockton Astronomical Society

## 2017 Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program



Figure 1: *Some past Striking Sparks winners*

This is the sixth year for the Stockton Astronomical Society's Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program. We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We think it's time to strike some sparks of interest by providing telescopes and mentoring to open up the Universe to young minds. Over the first five years of this program, we have given out twelve telescopes. We are hoping to award lots of telescopes each and every year.

Our program is based on the program of the same name run by the Sonoma County Astronomical Society. They have given away 256 telescopes over the past 29 years. 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 award the contest winners new, easy-to-use, reflecting (6-inch mirror), Dobsonian-mount telescopes to students that have been nominated by their teachers or by SAS members.

The contest is open to students in grades 1–12 who are either in San Joaquin County, or live in an area with an active Stockton Astronomical Society (SAS) mentor.

### Contest Procedure

#### 1. Teachers:

- 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 pages 4–5 (Parents' Information Sheet and meeting attendance information) and send home with each nominated student.
- Fill out one nomination form (page 3) for each student you nominate.

**2. Students:**

- Attend two or more Sky Tours, Star Parties, Planetarium shows, or SAS Meetings, between now and April 8, 2017.
- 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](http://stocktonastro.org) for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.

**3. Teachers:** 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.

**4. Teachers:** For each nominated student send:

- (a) SAS Striking Sparks Nomination Form (page 3).
- (b) Student's signed entry essay.
- (c) Student's attendance verification (page 5).
- (d) Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

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

**All contest entries must be postmarked no later than Saturday, April 8, 2017.**

We will contact the winning students and teachers at home on or after Saturday, April 22, 2017. 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 May 6, 2017.

**Questions?** We are eager to hear from you.

Jerry Hyatt (209) 565-1424 Email: [iamstillinthedark@gmail.com](mailto:iamstillinthedark@gmail.com) (Striking Sparks Coordinator)

Eric Holland (209) 351-0206 Email: [croessus@yahoo.com](mailto:croessus@yahoo.com) (SAS President)

Jeff Baldwin (209) 594-1894 Email: [baldjeff@comcast.net](mailto:baldjeff@comcast.net) (our go-to guy for nearly everything)

## Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program 2017 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 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 5).
4. Teacher's supporting statement.

Send to:

**SAS, Striking Sparks Telescope Contest**  
**P.O. Box 243**  
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## Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program

### Parent/Guardian Information

Dear Parent or Guardian,

This is the sixth year of the Stockton Astronomical Society's Striking Sparks Telescope Awards Program. We aim to promote science education in San Joaquin County and engender an interest in Astronomy in our youth. We think it's time to strike some sparks of interest 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 256 telescopes over the past 29 years. 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:**

- Attend two or more Sky Tours, Star Parties, Planetarium shows, or SAS Meetings, between now and April 8, 2017.
- 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](http://stocktonastro.org) for schedules, dates, times and places of possible events to attend.

- Return your essay and your Attendance Verification Form (page 5) 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.
  4. **All contest entries must be postmarked no later than Saturday, April 8, 2017.**
  5. We will contact the winning students and teachers at home on or after Saturday, April 22, 2017. The telescopes will be presented to the contest winners at 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 May 6, 2017.

**Questions?** We are eager to hear from you.

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Jeff Baldwin (209) 594-1894 Email: baldjeff@comcast.net (our go-to guy for nearly everything)

## Attendance Verification Form

(submit with application)

Students who enter the contest must attend at least two SAS events (meetings, star parties, planetarium shows) between now and April 8, 2017. 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](http://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: \_\_\_\_\_

## Upcoming Astronomy Events

Date	Event	Location
Sep 8	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Sep 9	Sky Tours	Delta College
Sep 10	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Oct 7	Sky Tours	Delta College
Oct 8	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Oct 13	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Nov 4	Sky Tours	Delta College
Nov 5	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park
Nov 10	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Dec 8	SAS General Meeting	UOP, Olson 120
Dec 9	Sky Tours	Delta College
Dec 10	Astronomy in the Park	Oak Grove Park

This is not a complete list. For more upcoming events, check the Calendar page at [stocktonastro.org](http://stocktonastro.org).