



MUSÉUMS **NATURE** MONTRÉAL

Biodôme  
Insectarium  
Jardin botanique  
Planétarium



**PRESS RELEASE**  
For immediate release

## **International Year of Astronomy A Stellar Success**

**Montréal, January 7, 2010** – The final celebrations in the International Year of Astronomy are now over. In the past year, thousands of people had a chance to discover or rediscover the beauties and mysteries of the starry sky. The team from Montréal's Nature Museums organized all sorts of activities for the general public to mark the 400th anniversary of Italian astronomer and physicist Galileo's first observation of the sky through a telescope, using a homemade spyglass. Thanks to special programming offered by the Montréal Planetarium, 318,000 people enjoyed first-hand contact with astronomy!

"The great public response to our observation evenings was very gratifying. This contact with the public was a unique opportunity to share our enthusiasm and our scientific knowledge, in a very friendly and relaxed setting," explained Charles-Mathieu Brunelle, Director of Montréal's Nature Museums.

In 2009, all these curious spirits enjoyed a "Galileo moment," be it at the Planetarium's Star Theatre, in a conference room, at the Chinese Garden in the Botanical Garden, in a park, or as part of a concert with the MSO. They attended shows on astronomy, observed the stars with or without binoculars or a telescope, guided by the Planetarium's astronomers, and listened to talks by astronomy experts and some eminent researchers. All these activities and events helped us reach and even surpass the goal of 250,000 "Galileo moments" in Quebec and one million across Canada.

Some participants even took away very concrete memories, for 32 draws were held to mark this festive year, giving the winners the opportunity to indulge their passion for astronomy. The grand prize winner took home a telescope, awarded during the closing ceremonies for the International Year of Astronomy.

### **Stellar partners, too!**

Such an extensive program of activities would not have been possible without the co-operation of many partners. Rio Tinto Alcan was the Planetarium's official partner for the International Year of Astronomy. Over 28 other partners, including the Mont-Mégantic Astrolab and the Société d'astronomie du Planétarium de Montréal, also pitched in, along with many amateur astronomers from different associations of the Fédération des astronomes amateurs du Québec.

Galileo changed our vision of the Universe and our place in it. Now let's keep our eyes wide open and trained on the sky, to continue enjoying and learning from the marvels of our Universe!



*Montréal's Nature Museums – the Biodôme, Insectarium, Botanical Garden and Planetarium – helping people enjoy nature to the fullest.*

For more information: [museumsnature.ca](http://museumsnature.ca)

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