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NEWS RELEASE

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THE LEARNING LAMP PARTNERS WITH STATE, COMMUNITY TO BRING MUSEUM-QUALITY PLANETARIUM TO AREA SCHOOLS

Johnstown, PA (July 6, 2010) – With many local students struggling in science and lacking the science skills to compete in our high-tech global economy, The Learning Lamp has added a new portable classroom to its popular Learning Lamp *To Go* traveling science program. **Discovery Dome, a five-meter portable planetarium, will debut over the summer as part of The Learning Lamp Academy of Arts and Sciences and will travel to schools throughout western Pennsylvania throughout the 2010-11 school year.**

“The Learning Lamp was able to raise almost \$36,000 to purchase Discovery Dome, thanks in large part to financial help from the state, local businesses and community organizations,” said Heidi Rizkalla, director of education at The Learning Lamp. “In fact, a number of contributors to our Discovery Dome appeal were science, engineering and technology-based companies that will most certainly benefit from having more young people in our region develop a greater interest and proficiency in science.”

According to 2009 PSSA scores, only 59% of students statewide performed at or above grade level in science. Proficiency among 4th graders was highest among all grades at 83%. Science scores at the middle school or 8th grade level, however, showed a sizeable drop in proficiency to 55%. Statewide scores among 11th graders plummeted to a troubling 40% of students performing at or above grade level in science.

Northrop Grumman Mission Systems, Lockheed Martin Aeoroparts, Inc., Community Foundation for the Alleghenies, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education were among Discovery Dome’s biggest supporters.

The Learning Lamp’s Discovery Dome programs include museum-quality, full-dome shows in stereo sound – filling nearly 360 degrees of the dome with sharp, vivid images. All shows are aligned with Pennsylvania Department of Education Academic Standards and were developed by Rice University and the Houston Museum of Natural Science with collaboration from NASA.

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The official registration and financial information of The Learning Lamp may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free with in Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. The Learning Lamp is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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Discovery Dome presentations available through The Learning Lamp *To Go* include:

- A **Stellarium** of 40 images of galaxies, nebulae, and star clusters that stimulate the skies from anywhere on earth;
- **“Saturn Ring World II”** which takes young audiences on the Cassini Mission to Saturn to explore the gas giant and its spectacular moon, Titan;
- **“It’s About Time”** which uses an imaginary space elevator and flying escape pods to teach children about the cycles that rule our planet and our lives;
- **“Earth’s Wild Ride”** which immerses audiences in a 3-D tour of Earth’s history and natural wonders. Kids roam the forest with a Tyrannosaur and take a roller-coaster-like ride through canyons of raging rivers and hot flowing lava – all while learning about eclipses, the ice age, Earth’s water cycle and difference between the Earth and Moon;
- and **“IBEX – Search for the Edge of the Solar System”** which follows scientists as they investigate the boundary between our Solar System and the rest of our galaxy. Students will get an in-depth look at the mission and how NASA’s Interstellar Boundary Explorer (IBEX) spaceprobe is collecting high-speed atoms to create a map of our Solar System’s boundary.

Because not every child, family, school or organization can afford costly visits to premier science centers or museums, The Learning Lamp grants *all* children access to museum-quality science experiences by making Discovery Dome available to schools, and community groups or organizations for affordable 30-minute, half-day and full-day programs. The Learning Lamp is accepting reservations now for assemblies throughout the 2010-11 school year. Discovery Dome requires a 25-foot square open floor space with a 12-foot ceiling and must be set up indoors.

To reserve Discovery Dome or for more information about The Learning Lamp *To Go* and its portable science and geography classrooms, call (814) 262-0732 or visit www.thelearninglamp.org.

The Learning Lamp is a nonprofit agency focused on providing children with the support they need to succeed in school. The Learning Lamp offers preschool, child care, before and after school programs, tutoring, SAT prep and summer camps for children in grades PreK to 12.

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Editor’s Note: Discovery Dome will be displayed at The Learning Lamp’s July 21st board meeting from 8:30 am to 9:30 am at the Greater Johnstown Career and Technology Center. Photo opportunities will be available inside and outside the dome with staff available for questions or comments.