



Summer Camp

Getting started with a Galaxy Explorers summer camp

Federation of Galaxy Explorers (FOGE) summer camps must be conducted with approval of FOGE Headquarters. There are several “lessons learned” that have come about as a result of the Galaxy Explorers summer camp pilot program. How the participating school chooses to run the camp offers great flexibility. There are, for example, a variety of lesson plans to choose from and such things as field trips, star parties, rocket launches, can all be included as part of the program. The Federation of Galaxy Explorers will work with schools to design the optimum program for their participants. Our experts are available to participate and assist. We can also put your school in touch with schools and school districts who have hosted successful camps.

Several procedures and lessons learned for initiating a program are as follows:

Responsibilities

- **Schools provide the following**

- Facility
- Liability insurance consistent with summer camps
- Required forms – parent consent, release for media photos, etc.
- Any transportation required consistent with summer programs
- Many schools require some teachers be present for the conduct of any camp
- Access to parents (through take home flyers, PTA meetings, etc.) to recruit volunteers for the camp

- **Federation of Galaxy Explorers provides the following:**

- Lesson plans and associated materials – video tapes, CDs, slide shows
- Volunteer training
- Organization of camp activities
 - Schedules, program guidance
- Assistance in securing support from local businesses and organizations
- Handouts for camp participants
- Other required items – e.g. GPS units, rocket launchers, etc.

- **Camp attendees will provide the following:**

- Household items for activities (cardboard, tin foil, plastic bottles, bottle caps, etc.)
- In previous camps we have charged a nominal fee of \$20.00 that purchased (for each participant) 1. Camp tee shirt, 2. Camp ball cap, 3. Model rocket, 4. Cardboard refractor telescope (built as an activity in a lesson plan)

First Steps

The below activities are conducted by Federation of Galaxy Explorers volunteers.

- Discuss with school (or district) the prospect of hosting a Galaxy Explorers summer camp.
- Invite the community to a Galaxy Explorers Summer Camp information night at school. Use the school's e-mails, personal invitation to existing parent teacher association leaders, flyers for the classroom, classroom invitation presentation, local radio announcements and the local newspaper.
 - Show what you are offering will be exciting, challenging and fun for the participants.
 - Ensure parent volunteers understand and agree that they will contribute a certain time for the camp (morning or afternoon).
- Recruit volunteer leadership prior to the organization meeting if possible.
- Parents of interested youth are often willing to be involved.

Organizing

- **Initial organizing steps:**
 - Get approval from principal or school district to have Galaxy Explorers summer camp. Explain the responsibilities of all parties.
 - Brief parents on program at PTA meeting or organizational meeting (schools will send out fliers announcing)
 - Solicit parent volunteers
- Ensure each parent is prepared to put an established period of time towards this effort

- **Establish a schedule of camp planning meetings with school and coordinating parties (partnership councils, companies, etc.). We have found this single act is often the key to a successful program**
 - First camp planning meeting should accomplish the following:
 - Schedule for camp (half day? One or two weeks?)
 - Lesson plans to be used (on line at www.foge.org)
 - Schedule for volunteer training (minimum of two meetings – Sat morns)
 - Whether any camp fees will be charged by school
 - Whether teachers will be present and their exact role.
 - If the school is paying for teachers, they should participate in the overall effort.
 - Graduation date and event
- Media and press releases

Lessons Learned

- Ensure EVERYONE has camp schedule with dates. Galaxy Explorers Hdqs. can provide tremendous support such as visiting astronauts, scientists, field trips, etc. but these must be scheduled well in advanced.
- **ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE FEDERATION OF GALXY EXPLORERS.** This can be done on-line at www.foge.org or by contacting or faxing our volunteer coordinator 1(877) 761-1266.
- See that each person who volunteers receives orientation about the organization, the camp curriculum and how to work efficiently with youth. (See the outline of a Galaxy Explorer volunteer orientation workshop).
- Ensure school has one very responsible person – a volunteer is best - to oversee Camp activities for that school.
- Communications
 - COMMUNICATE BY PHONE WITH EVERYONE e-mails are not enough. Volunteer participation has been much higher when communicating by phone.
 - Establish a “phone tree” as soon as possible for adults and Galaxy Explorers.
 - Each person should be reminded of meetings one week prior to the event.