

## For Immediate Release

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### The Galactic Center to be Unveiled at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center

CONCORD, NH – New England residents will be taken on a journey to the center of our Galaxy as the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center unveils unprecedented mural-sized images of the Milky Way's core as seen by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, Spitzer Space Telescope, and Chandra X-ray Observatory on November 10th at 10:15 AM.

Only a handful of museums across the country were selected to receive these special murals. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 celebrates the 400th anniversary of Galileo turning a telescope to the heavens. Since Galileo's spyglass, telescopes have grown ever larger and ever better, and have moved to mountaintops and into space. NASA's Great Observatories represent the crowning achievements of astronomy four centuries later and are honoring this legacy with a national image unveiling.

A giant 6-foot-by-3-foot image presents a unique view that showcases the Galaxy in near-infrared light observed by Hubble, infrared light observed by Spitzer, and X-ray light observed by Chandra. This combined image was carefully assembled from mosaic photo surveys of the core by each telescope. It provides the most wide-ranging view ever of our Galaxy's mysterious hub.

The Discovery Center will also unveil a matched trio of Hubble, Spitzer, and Chandra images of the Milky Way's center on a second large panel measuring 3 feet by 4 feet. Each image shows the telescope's different wavelength view of the central region of our Galaxy that illustrates not only the unique science each observatory conducts, but also how far astronomy has come since Galileo.

Within these images visitors can trace the spectacle of stellar evolution: from vibrant regions of star birth, to young hot stars, to old cool stars, to seething remnants of stellar death called black holes. This activity occurs against a vivid backdrop in the crowded, hostile environment of the Galaxy's core, the center of which is dominated by a super-massive black hole millions of times more massive than our Sun. These multi-wavelength views provide both stunning beauty and a wealth of scientific information that could not have been dreamed of by Galileo.

Additional information about the Hubble Space Telescope is available at <http://hubblesite.org/>. Additional information about the Spitzer Space Telescope is available at <http://www.spitzer.caltech.edu/>. Additional information about the Chandra X-ray Observatory is available at <http://chandra.harvard.edu/>. Additional information about NASA's celebration of the International Year of Astronomy is available at <http://astronomy2009.nasa.gov/>.

The International Year of Astronomy Great Observatories Image Unveiling is supported by the NASA Science Mission Directorate Astrophysics Division. The mural project is a collaboration between the Space Telescope Science Institute, the Spitzer Science Center and the Chandra X-ray Center.

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The new McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center is a lively science center, featuring 21st century interactive exhibits on aviation, astronomy, Earth and space sciences, a state-of-the-art planetarium and a variety of science, technology, engineering and math programs.

The engaging, robust educational programs are geared towards families, teens, seniors, students, community groups, and lifelong learners. For more information, visit [www.starhop.com](http://www.starhop.com).

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