

GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY FOUNDATION

# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT AND SERVICE





# YOUR SUPPORT IS MISSION-CRITICAL

People from all over the world come to Griffith Observatory in search of a connection to the universe and our place in it. As a leader in public astronomy, Griffith Observatory's mission is to inspire everyone to observe, ponder, and understand the sky.

As the Observatory's exclusive non-profit partner, **Griffith Observatory Foundation makes that possible**. With essential contributions from donors, partners, funders, staff, and volunteers, the Foundation advances this iconic institution through fundraising, resource development, capacity building, and special initiatives.

Griffith Observatory Foundation is the channel to **transform your passion for science and public service into real impact**.





"I dedicated my career to public science programming and higher education, and I know access to the Observatory's instruments and exhibits inspires a world of greater discernment and curiosity.

Misinformation and distrust of science are rampant in our society, and the effects can be devastating. It is increasingly urgent for us to meet the moment and support science education and Griffith Observatory in its mission."

- Eve Haberfield, Ph.D., Vice President,  
Griffith Observatory Foundation Board of Directors





# CONNECTING THE WORLD TO THE GREAT NORTH AMERICAN ECLIPSE...

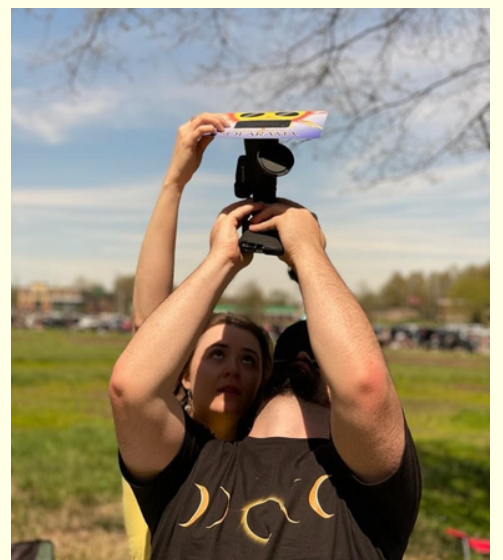
From [Los Angeles](#) to [Mazatlán](#) to [Saratoga Springs, NY](#), Observatory and Foundation staff traveled near and far to catch the total solar eclipse over North America and share it with the world.

As part of our public service commitment, the Observatory and the Foundation provided resources to help people near and far make the most of observing the total solar eclipse with a [live broadcast from the path of totality](#), tips for safe viewing, and [classroom content for educators](#).

Thanks to Foundation support, Griffith Observatory's broadcast team now has the capacity to stream more events from the field such as the September, 2024, [major lunar standstill from Chimney Rock, Colorado](#).

Stay tuned to [Griffith Observatory's YouTube channel](#) for more exciting astronomical broadcasts to come.

*Foundation Communications Coordinator Ella Ritts and her husband photograph a partial eclipse before totality in Cape Girardeau, MO.*



*Griffith Observatory's Astronomical Observer Vanessa Alarcon and her guests in Little Rock, Arkansas.*



# ... AND TO ONE ANOTHER

On April 8, 2024, Los Angeles was outside the path of totality, but that didn't stop locals from making the most of the event. While Observatory staff were dispersed across the country focused on total eclipse coverage, hundreds of people spontaneously came together at Griffith Observatory to observe the partial eclipse in an impromptu community gathering under the sky.

"I went [to Griffith Observatory] for the solar eclipse and it was a moving experience to come together with a lot of different people and share in the common wonder of this rare celestial event." - Brian C.



*Crowds flock to Griffith Observatory for look at rare solar eclipse, KCAL News*



"I particularly enjoy working with the public at outreach events to enhance their understanding and appreciation of science and technology. I have been fascinated by STEM and by astronomy since elementary school, and pursued those interests to a very rewarding career as an engineering manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. I retired from JPL earlier this year and felt it would be a natural transition to help support and promote the Observatory and its missions as a volunteer."

- Carol L., Foundation Volunteer



# SEE THE WORLD AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Mazatlán, Mexico



By Shelley Smith



By Melanie Flavin

Click to  
Watch the  
Total  
Eclipse  
Replay

## Belton, Texas

Participation in Foundation travel programs are a one-of-a-kind way to see the world. For the 2024 total solar eclipse, two groups of eclipse chasers embarked on trips led by Griffith Observatory staff astronomers for guided journeys in the days leading up to the main event.

In addition to enjoying curated itineraries and the company of like-minded travelers, participants made donations to the Foundation to help extend their love of astronomy to the world.



By Yoseline Gutierrez



Astronomical Lecturer Dr. David Reitzel  
addresses travelers in Belton, TX



"I became a volunteer because I love science and wanted to get more involved in my community. Learning about the cosmos is one of the few things that can still unite humanity." -Shannon A., Foundation Volunteer

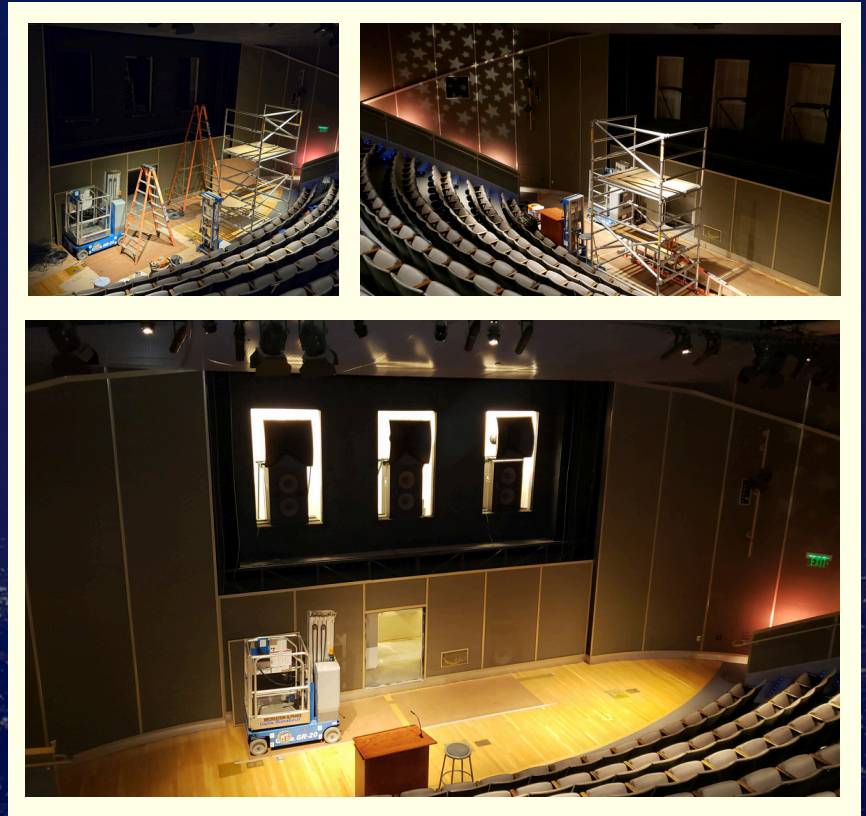


# RENOVATED SPACE... FOR SPACE

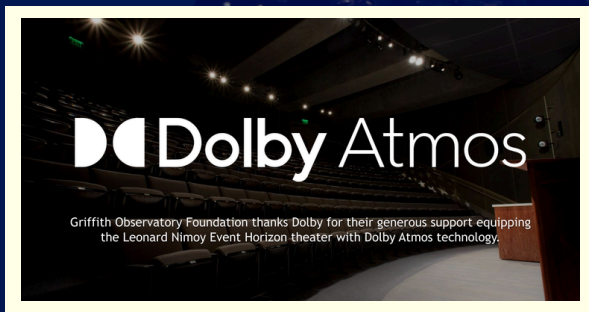
Griffith Observatory Foundation is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the iconic theaters and exhibits to ensure Griffith Observatory remains a shining landmark for all to experience!

## WORK IN PROGRESS

In 2024, funds from Foundation members, supporters, and partners helped ensure the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon theater would live long and prosper. The theater closed for a six weeks to undergo a technical renovation, which included a full upgrade to the theater's sound system to meet industry standards and deliver a premier sonic experience. The existing system was replaced with Dolby Atmos for a fully immersive sound environment in the iconic venue.



The theater projection system was upgraded from high-definition to 4K, and the projector screen was replaced with one that is darker in reflectance so that projected images appear richer with more dynamic range and more vibrant colors.



Griffith Observatory Foundation thanks Dolby for their generous support equipping the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon theater with Dolby Atmos technology.



"It's so special to witness someone look through a telescope and see Jupiter or Saturn for the first time. It's a powerful connection to something so much bigger." - Rich A., Foundation Volunteer



# SPARKING COSMIC CURIOSITY

Griffith Observatory has been delivering quality educational programming since opening its doors in 1935. In 2024, the school programs are immersive STEM learning experiences that align with Next Generation Science Standards. Fully funded by Griffith Observatory Foundation, these programs are entirely free to participants, and bus scholarships are available for Title I schools.

Today, School Programs are offered both in person and online, creating nearly limitless opportunities for student learning. With barriers like the cost of transportation and geography out of the way, hundreds of thousands of students can be served.

At the end of the 2023-2024 academic year, [Griffith Observatory's School Programs were featured on LA Times Today](#), a recurring segment on Spectrum 1 News that highlights community programs having meaningful local impact.





# ART & SCIENCE COLLIDE



*Pacific Standard Universe* is an original short film by Griffith Observatory and a program of PST ART: Art & Science Collide, the Getty's landmark regional event exploring the intersections of art and science. The film shows the way people used art to explain the cosmos for thousands of years until the modern universe was discovered in Southern California.

The film premiered on September 9, 2024, alongside two panel discussions: one with the production's Chumash cultural advisors and voice talent Manuel "Bo" Armenta and Rex Saint-Onge, Sr. as well as Griffith Observatory Director Dr. E.C. Krupp and other PST ART participants including UCLA Professor Dr. Victoria Vesna and LACMA Curator Dr. Stephen Little. The program was moderated by Foundation Board Secretary Tricia Nelson and was an illuminating conversation on the intersection of art and science.

The film [now plays](#) daily in the Leonard Nimoy Event Horizon theater. The film is a project of PST ART with additional support from Griffith Observatory Foundation.





# ADVOCACY FOR PUBLIC ASTRONOMY & OUR PARKS

The City budget proposed in April, 2024, included significant personnel and funding cuts for the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP), which owns and operates Griffith Observatory. The elimination of a crucial Observatory position was included in those proposed cuts.

Many Foundation supporters contacted Los Angeles City Council members and submitted public comments. Our message was clear: Communities need safe, clean, well-maintained recreation and park facilities, and that includes Griffith Observatory.

Thanks to Foundation advocacy, the City Council modified the proposed budget to reduce some of the impacts on RAP and to restore the Observatory position proposed for deletion. Unfortunately, the final, approved City budget (which took effect on July 1) still included the loss of hundreds of full-time RAP positions and a reduction in RAP's part-time staff budget.

As public resources, Griffith Observatory and Los Angeles City parks will always require the advocacy of its supporters. The Foundation community answered this time, and will surely be called upon again in the future to ensure these beloved places and spaces are secure for generations to come.



"Griffith Observatory is a vital place in Los Angeles and thrives because of the people who support it. Rain or shine there are always people coming to the Observatory – for locals it is a place to hike to, unwind, relax, explore, and for visitors from near and far it is a must stop for its iconic power and for the unique opportunities it gives people to gaze up at the sky and get a sense of our place in the universe. Griffith Observatory is a jewel in the LA parks system and deserves the resources to continue to flourish." - Sam C.



# DEDICATIONS UNDER THE STARS

In 2024, the Foundation opened a very special seat dedication opportunity in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium. These dedications have been etched in the cosmic landscape at Griffith Observatory. The Samuel Oschin Planetarium operates 10-12 hours per day, six days a week, and each year it serves 27,000 fifth-graders who attend our free In-Person School Program and captivates another 400,000 visitors from across the region and around the world to see our shows each year.

The Foundation thanks our Name a Seat donors for sharing their passion for astronomy, education, and service with the people of Los Angeles and visitors from around the globe!



"The Observatory has long been one of my favorite places in LA. I love the reminder of how immense the universe is and how incredible it is that we get to be a part of it." - Ashley P., Foundation Volunteer



## Name A Seat

The following seats in the Samuel Oschin Planetarium have been proudly inscribed, made possible by generous support and heartfelt dedications.

THE NATALIE EVANS FAMILY  
IN HONOR OF DR. E.C. KRUPP  
NIEMACK HASSET PRODUCTIONS  
IN MEMORY OF NICK READ APRIL 2014  
THEO N STEIN 8-21-2017 YOUR 1st TOTAL  
ECLIPSE

MILO H STEIN 8-21-2017 YOUR 1st TOTAL  
ECLIPSE

DAVID & TERRI BLOOMGARDEN  
EMBRACE THE SKY

TO MY LOVING FATHER CARMELO J.  
NATOLI

THE ROSE HILLS FOUNDATION  
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DEBRA J. FLETCHER LOVING AND LOVED  
TIM FLETCHER BLESSED AND LOVED

ERNIE AND NIA ZAFERIS  
FUTURIST LUCY CASADO

NOW STARDUST FRANK CASADO  
IN MEMORY OF JERRY MUCHIN  
DR. TERENCE C. D'SOUZA WISH YOU  
WERE HERE

ANNE AND LOUIS DACHS  
NAT LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK  
JACK SHOOT FOR THE STARS! GRAM&PA  
THE BOEING COMPANY

IN HONOR OF THE LESEMAN FAMILY  
TO EXPLORE THE UNKNOWN BRIAN  
YANAGITANI

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DANA KOVARIC ADVENTURER OF THE  
UNIVERSE

VICKE SELK "KEEP LOOKING UP"

ELI COLOSIO REACH FOR THE STARS!  
SAMUEL AND LYNDA OSCHIN

IN LOVING MEMORY OF JULIE BRILL  
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# GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY FOUNDATION

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JACK WRIGHT STILL LOOKING UP  
JACK WRIGHT YUP STILL LOOKING  
JANET & CHARLEY HOULT 10+ ECLIPSES  
AIM FOR THE STARS! SHELLI A. HERMAN  
BE AMAZED WITH ALL OF NATURE  
JIM WITOSZYNSKI  
ZIDAAN IRFAN MAY THE FORCE BE WITH  
YOU





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We are truly grateful for the support of our members, donors, and partners.  
Your leadership, generosity, and enthusiasm are the center of our universe.

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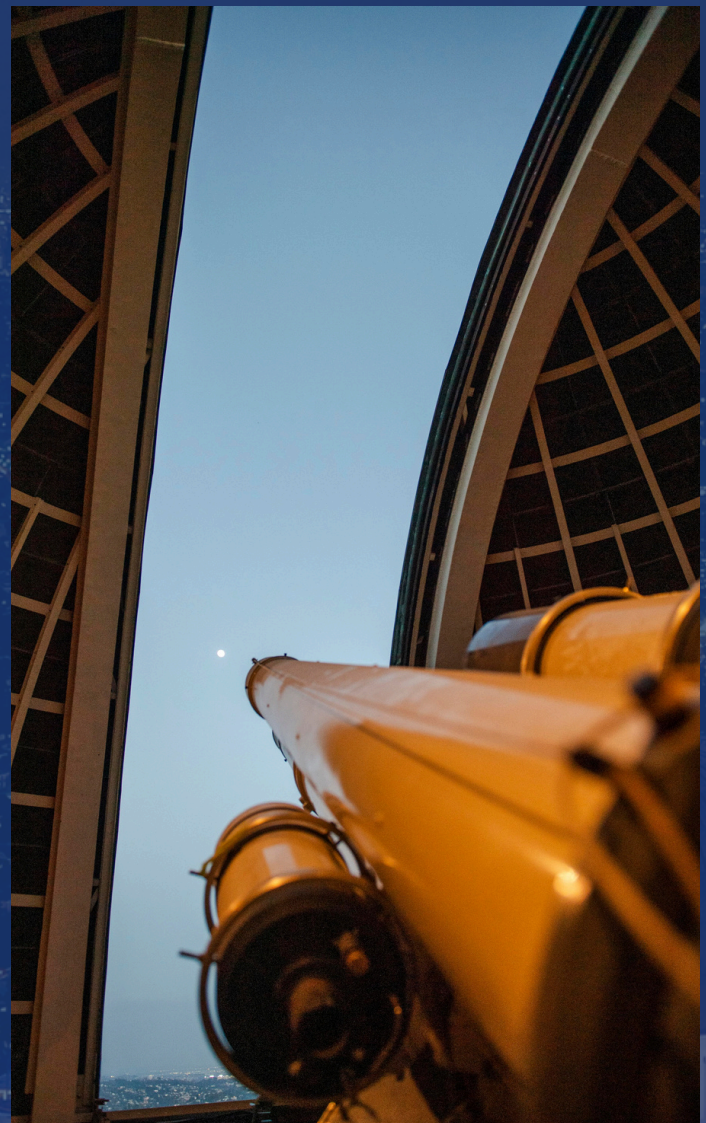


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## Infinity Society

Forward-thinking donors ensure their legacy through estate planning. Griffith Observatory was founded on this type of giving. Los Angeles resident and philanthropist Griffith J. Griffith knew how he wanted to make his mark: by funding a public observatory where everyone would have the opportunity to observe, ponder, and understand the sky. He left a gift in his will for the City of Los Angeles to be used for the construction of Griffith Observatory, which has remained free to the public since it opened in 1935.

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## Vanguard Society

Vanguard Society is the premier philanthropic group at Griffith Observatory Foundation ensuring Griffith Observatory can weather any storm and sustain this iconic Los Angeles institution for generations to come.

Sandra and Howard Einberg  
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Arthur Levine  
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Doug Upshaw

To discuss how you can make a meaningful and lasting impact, please contact Melanie Flavin, Director of Development: [MFlavin@GriffithObservatoryFoundation.org](mailto:MFlavin@GriffithObservatoryFoundation.org)



## Tributes

Making a donation to Griffith Observatory Foundation can be an occasion to honor someone stellar. Whether marking an accomplishment, a milestone, or general appreciation, tribute gifts spotlight the people who help us all shine a little brighter.

In honor of **Griffith Observatory for Excellent Coverage of the Solar Eclipse**  
**04/08/2024**

– from *Vicki Bliss*

In honor of **Jerry and Lorraine Factor** – from *Ronnie Dorsey*

In honor of **Rich Semler** – from *Jeannie Flint*

In honor of **Takoda Uribe Gardner** – from *Richard L. Gardner*

In honor of **Ella Ritts**, and her contagious love and enthusiasm for all things  
planetarium-y – from *Margaret Goddard*

In honor of **Patti Wheeler** – from *Saraa Doris Lee*

In honor of **Joshua**, may all your birthday wishes come true – from *Jerry Lim*

In honor of **all of the amateur and professional astronomers who share their  
telescopes and knowledge with us** – from *Wendy Lynch*

In honor of **David Primes** – from *Kathleen Primes*

In honor of **Caitie Sawyer-Smith** – from *Carla Smith*

To learn more about giving a gift, please contact Yoseline Gutierrez,  
Development Coordinator: [YGutierrez@GriffithObservatoryFoundation.org](mailto:YGutierrez@GriffithObservatoryFoundation.org)



# Memorials

Supporting Griffith Observatory is a unique and meaningful way to honor the memory of a loved one. In memoriam contributions ensure that their passion for public astronomy lives on.

In memory of **Mrs. Florence Krupp** – *Anonymous*

In memory of **Denise Liggett** – *from Anonymous*

In memory of **Gerry Picus** – *from Anonymous*

In memory of **Stewart Fliege**, a former employee of Griffith Observatory in the 1950s – *from Charlayne Fliege*

In memory of **my mother, Susan C. Riford** – *from Suzanne Ford-Toman*

In memory of **Myron and Lillian Lees** – *from Stephanie Widger*

In memory of **Gary F. Wirth**, a friend to the Griffith Observatory  
– *from Court Wirth*

To learn more about giving a gift, please contact Yoseline Gutierrez,  
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Our work is made possible by the philanthropic community and individual supporters. Join us in our commitment to Griffith Observatory and public science programming with a donation today: [obs.la/donate](https://obs.la/donate)