



Planetarium Gallery—What's it all about?

When the planetarium arrives in the morning, it's just a van full of boxes, cases, and duffle bags. It takes about an hour to transform it into a real planetarium.



But soon, it seems to come alive. Kids love to watch the dome inflate. They often say, "It looks like a dinosaur." "It looks like a whale." "Jiffy-Pop!" "An igloo!" "Do we jump on it?" And I answer, "*Please don't jump on it!*"



The dome is soon inflated to full size and quietly awaits the arrival of the first class, while Mr. Meader sets up the equipment inside.



Everyone is surprised to find that the planetarium dome is inflated with just two window fans. The fans run all the time, keeping the dome inflated and providing fresh air to breathe when we're inside during the show.



When the kids arrive, we take off our shoes, and after a quick introduction, we go inside. To get inside we crawl through the small tube on the side.



We learn about many different things inside the planetarium depending on what you're studying in science. Two of the most popular subjects are the solar system and the stars.

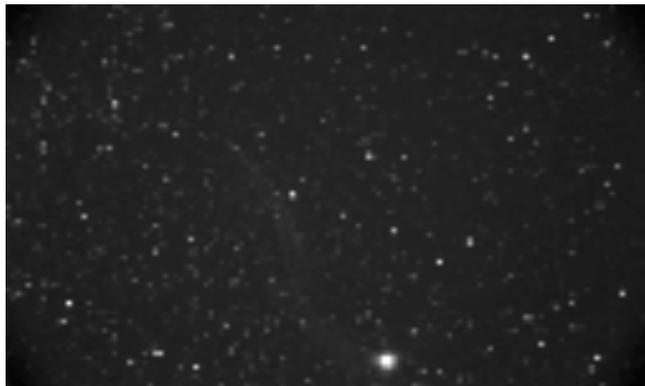




John Meader, Northern Stars Planetarium Director, will be your guide. He sits in the center of the star theater at his control console where he operates all the special effects, the video projector, the star projector and a sound system. The console controls all that is seen on the dome.



Atop the console sits *Matilda*, the star projector. Matilda creates the stars you'll see overhead to make a beautiful pretend night sky. It'll look just like you were outdoors at night!

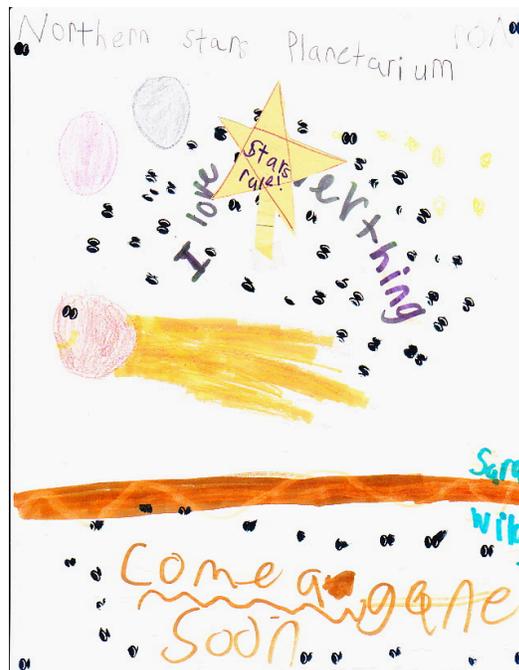
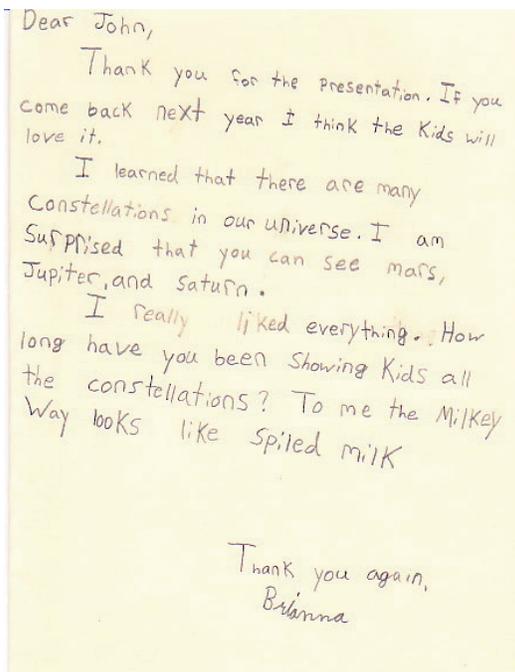
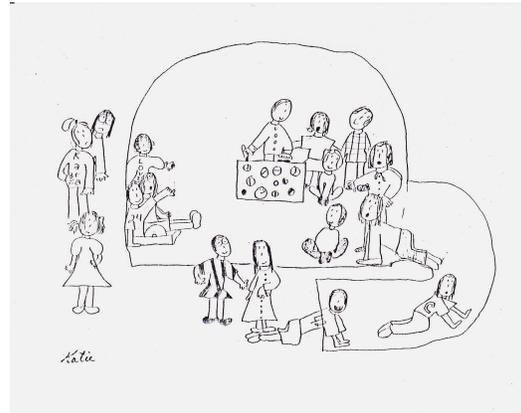
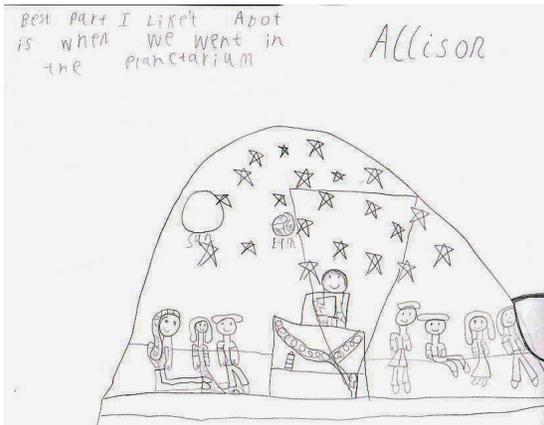


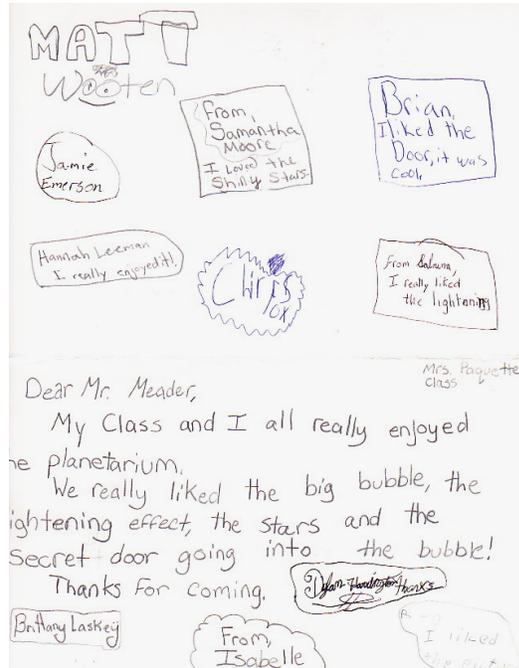
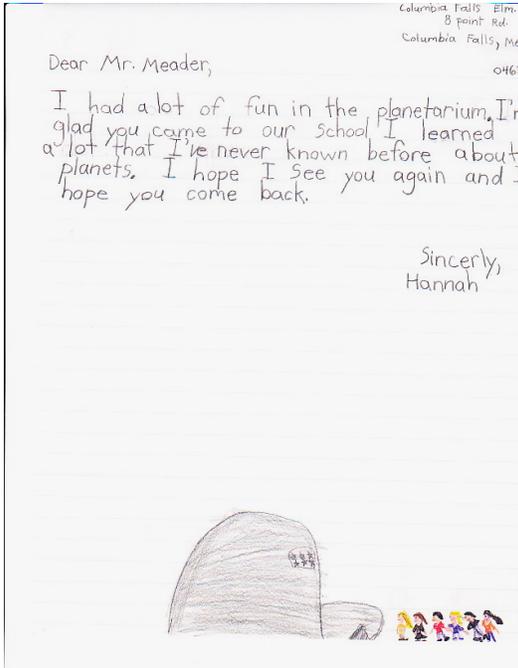


When the show is over and all the questions have been answered, it's common for groups to have their class picture taken either inside or just outside the dome. The hour has gone by fast, it's been a fun way to learn about space.



P.S. We love getting your letters and drawings too!





I can't wait to see you inside the dome!

~John Meader