



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DISCOVER THE UNIVERSE PRESENTS THE LOOK UP CHALLENGE

A winter astronomy observation contest! #LookUpChallenge

Discover the Universe has partnered with the Institute for Research on Exoplanets (iREx), the Mont Mégantic Observatory, and the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics to create a family-oriented astronomy challenge.

Members of the public are invited to participate by printing an activity sheet from the Discover the Universe website and marking off each astronomy event or object they are able to observe in the night sky. There are twelve unique astronomy sightings to catch through the holiday season, including a rare instance of two of our solar system's planets aligning.

"We really wanted to highlight some of the unique viewing opportunities this December. This challenge is designed for people of any age or education level. And everything listed on the activity sheet is visible to the naked eye, so you don't need any special equipment," explains Julie Bolduc-Duval, Executive Director for Discover the Universe.

Each of the suggested observations are visible across Canada and at similar latitudes around the world (Europe, United States, northern parts of Africa ...). But some will be a challenge! For example, Jupiter and Saturn may be too close to the horizon for our neighbours up north.

Participating families are encouraged to enter the contest and submit an image of their work via the website. Prizes and winners will be announced in January.

"So many things haven't gone to plan this year, but the sky always does what we expect, which is reassuring! If the weather doesn't cooperate with us, we'll share alternate ideas for how to connect with the night sky," says Marie-Eve Naud, Project Coordinator for Discover the Universe.

About Discover the Universe: Founded in 2011, Discover the Universe provides free training and resources in astronomy for teachers and educators nation-wide.

About partner organizations:

The **Institute for Research on Exoplanets** based in Montreal, QC is one of the world's leading research institutes in the study of exoplanets and connected spheres of astrophysics, bringing together researchers and their students across several Quebec institutions. It also supports a prominent educational and outreach component which includes the creation and delivery of astronomy content for students and the general public across Canada and beyond. <http://www.exoplanetes.umontreal.ca/>

The **Mont Mégantic Observatory (OMM)** is a scientific infrastructure jointly managed by the Université de Montréal (UdeM) and Université Laval (UL) and nestled in the heart of the world's first International Dark Sky Reserve. The OMM is dedicated to research in astrophysics and it includes a world-class laboratory team who works in close collaboration with industrial and government partners to design high-tech instruments for large ground-based and space-based telescopes. <https://www.facebook.com/OMMastro>

The **Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics** at the University of Toronto is an endowed research institute with more than 70 faculty, postdocs, students and staff, dedicated to innovative technology, ground-breaking research, world-class training, and public engagement. <https://www.dunlap.utoronto.ca/>

For logos and images, please visit: <http://www.dunlap.utoronto.ca/~du/Defi2020Challenge>