

Open House at ESO Garching

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On October 22, ESO in Garching opened its doors to the public, as part of the traditional all-campus Open House. The event was successful again this year, clearly generating a lot of public interest, with 2000–2500 visitors passing through our building within a seven-hour period. For ESO, the Open House is an important element of our continued dialogue with the local community, playing a key role in maintaining awareness about astronomy in general and about our organisation in particular.

About forty ESO staff, from many different divisions, participated in the event to provide, in an attractive and varied programme, information about ESO and the ongoing work at this organisation. The



Photos: H. H. Heyer, ESO (3)

The videoconferences with Paranal generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm.



The Open House was also very successful among children.

visitors could, for example, watch a specially edited 15-min movie about ESO, listen to different talks on topics such as "exoplanets", "the life of an astronomer" or "spectroscopy", view demonstrations of image processing, the Virtual Observatory, the principle of interferometry, CCD cameras and infrared detectors, as well as examine the VLT, ALMA and OWL models. Regular videoconferences were also done with Paranal and they all generated a lot of interest and enthusiasm in the public. In addition, there was an indoor planetarium – always very successful among children, an exhibition of astronomical paintings and ceramics as well as exhibitions of the Volkssternwarte München and the Observatory of Königsleiten. The Personnel Department provided visitors with information about employment opportunities at ESO, and

the ST-ECF also had a stand. The ESO amateur group, AGAPE, had kindly prepared several activities, viz. the observation of the Sun and a demonstration of radio astronomy.

The visitors were also given a chance to participate in the famous ESO Quiz, and many entered the competition. Among the numerous correct answers to the twelve questions, 46 winners were selected and were offered books, CD-Roms or posters.

Visitors came from all over Bavaria, but also from Austria, and even from Italy and France. Many expressed their satisfaction with the activities being offered. There was clearly a lot to do and see as some even spent the whole day at ESO!



The OWL model attracted much interest.