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### **CDCC joins the Delaware Aerospace Education Foundation for a Ribbon Cutting**

DOVER – The Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce hosted a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Delaware Aerospace Education Foundation (DASEF) on August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 4 pm at their location 585 Big Oak Road in Smyrna. The ceremony was held in front of the Outpost’s Galaxy Garden. Chamber members, friends, and staff members joined Dr. Stephanie Wright and her board and staff members to celebrate the grandeur of the Galaxy Garden.

Built on a foundation of integrity and compassion, responsible decision-making, environmental stewardship, innovation, exploration, and discovery, DASEF’s vision is to create an exceptional learning environment that inspires children and their families with a sense of appreciation for the earth and its place in the universe. For more than 30 years, the folks at DASEF have been careful to help people understand that the study of space is about more than just the exploration of other planets. Dr. Stephanie Wright and her team at DASEF are focused on using their academic curriculum, presentation, symposiums, professional development opportunities, events, activities, and resources of the Environmental Outpost to inspire and educate the people of the Delaware Valley in learning about science, space, technology, engineering, the Earth’s environment, and mathematics. “NASA isn’t just about space exploration,” commented Dr. Wright, “It’s about going into space in order to look back at our planet and learn how to care for it!”

Among the plethora of innovative teaching tools utilized at the Outpost is the incredible Galaxy Garden. This garden is 100 feet in diameter and is an outdoor scale model of the Milky Way Galaxy. Every plant, leaf,

and speck mirrors a portion of the Milky Way. Jon Lomberg, astronomical artist and founder of the Galaxy Garden idea, explains it this way: “It’s taking the Milky Way Galaxy and scaling it down for people to understand.” The ½ acre spiral is created to scale with plants representing stars, planets, asteroid, and anything else found in the galaxy. For example, gold dust plants, with gold specks on each leaf, were used to represent the stars and to show the vastness of the Milky Way. Based on current astronomical data, each speck represents roughly 100,000 stars! Mr. Lomberg’s original garden is in Hawaii – DASEF boasts the second of three Galaxy Gardens in the entire world – the third is in Spain. As a final touch to the garden, Dr. Wright went in search of something sparkly for its pathways. She found that crushed coal has a very shiny, twinkly quality to it and used it to achieve the space-like effect. A working weather station has been installed near the garden, as well as a Sun Tower whose shadow illustrates the rapid rotation of the Earth.

In addition to the Galaxy Garden, DASEF’s campus in Smyrna boasts the Mountjoy Observatory with its 16” Meade telescope, a classroom filled with amazing manipulatives for learning about life on Earth and exploration in space, a butterfly patio, and the unique Planetary Walk, which begins just outside the Outpost building with a granite marker for the sun and progresses across the property to Pluto’s granite marker demonstrating the placement of the planets to scale. The team at DASEF works diligently to provide educational programming, birthday parties, explorations, “evening Eyes on the Sky” events, and an amazing camp experience known as the Delaware Aerospace Academy. Overall, DASEF touches more than 25,000 individuals each year through these experiences.

People are invited to roam the grounds and walk through the Galaxy Garden at their leisure. For a guided experience, please call and schedule an appointment. To learn more about DASEF and all they have to offer, call (302) 659-5003 or visit them on the web at [www.dasef.org](http://www.dasef.org). Please join the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce in congratulating the folks at DASEF on their magnificent Galaxy Garden!

