

Application Story

Christie and Galaxy Theatres provide an "Out of this world" experience



Galaxy's Uptown Theater in Gig Harbor, WA played host to 1200 local elementary and high school students during a first-ever live chat with the public sector and NASA's International Space Station.



Live Earth to Space Station Chat with NASA astronauts for Washington

Establishing a connection with NASA's International Space Station traveling at about 17,500 MPH approximately 125 miles above the surface of the earth seems like an astronomical feat. But holding a live 25-minute Q&A with Key Peninsula Middle School students was an "out of this world" experience that none will soon forget.

Galaxy Theatres in Gig Harbor, Washington has 10 screens. All ten are fitted with Christie CP2000 digital cinema projectors. The largest is the main theatre at almost 100' wide. When Expedition 18 astronauts Mike Fincke and Sandra Magnus appeared onscreen, floating in space, their "Good morning Key Peninsula school students," was met with a rousing cheer from all ten theaters. Then...you could have heard a pin drop.

Of the 1200 people in attendance, most were students from Key Peninsula Middle School in Lakebay, Washington, one of the two NASA Explorer Schools in Washington State, Peninsula School District's Vaughn Elementary School, Harbor Ridge Middle School and Peninsula High School.

Key Peninsula Middle School students currently engage in aerospace learning experiences, research and simulations that expose them to the challenging endeavor of human space exploration. Currently in its fifth year, the NASA Explorer School program provides many extended opportunities for students to engage in science, math, engineering and other technology-related critical thinking projects.

Client:

Galaxy Theatres

Industry/Market:

Cinema, Managed Services

Summary:

On January 21st, 2009 Christie helped Galaxy Theatres to hold a live 25-minute Q&A between NASA's International Space Station, travelling at about 17,500 MPH approximately 125 miles above the surface of the earth and students from Key Peninsula Middle School elementary and high school students in Gig Harbor, Washington.

Challenges:

This historic first-time event was a once-only live feed — the theater screens could not be down at any time.

Results:

Over 1200 school children and adults had the opportunity to speak directly with International Space Station astronauts, enhancing their own math and sciences studies.

Products:

CP2000 digital cinema projectors, CinelPMs

Frank Rimkus, CEO at Galaxy Theatres, was impressed with the turnout and the visible sense of excitement. "We were thrilled to be one of the first movie houses in the country to work with NASA and host so many deserving students and educators in this stimulating and inspiring environment," he said. "At Galaxy Theatres, we believe that being socially entrepreneurial helps build strong bonds and goodwill in the communities we serve." A real community event, local Rotary Clubs provided funding to bus the students to and from the event.

Rimkus noted that the installation of Christie digital cinema projectors in Galaxy Theatres were the cornerstone of the event. They transform the neighborhood theatres in cutting-edge multi-media presentation facilities, providing them with advanced capabilities that are often lacking in most communities.

"Digital cinema converts a theatre from a single-product business into an infinite product business, enabling a wide range of live events and entertainment options," he added. "I can see in the not-too-distant future when movie houses will become a community center again, and provide a more compelling educational experience for students whose schools could not otherwise afford them in the classrooms. Not every student can attend Harvard or fly in outer space, but we can bring Harvard, the stars and beyond to every student through digital cinema."

Christie Managed Services support Galaxy Theatres from a technology perspective through remote monitoring via the 24/7 Network Operations Center. "Christie Managed Services – has been a real supporter of Galaxy Theatres and an enormous help," said Rimkus. The theaters are all fitted with Christie CP2000s, the most deployed digital cinema projectors in the world. Using COMCAST as the delivery provider, and linking through Christie Cine-IPMs, Galaxy was able to broadcast with a farther reach than ever thought possible.

The NASA Explorer School project offers a three-year partnership between NASA and school teams, consisting of teachers and education administrators from diverse communities across the country. Focusing on underserved populations, the program is designed for education communities at the fourth to ninth grade levels to help middle school improve teaching and learning in science, technology, engineering and math education.

Even though there have been downlinks happening since 2001, with only a few in the last two years, this was the first time that it happened between the private sector and public education. Rimkus thought of the idea of the event himself. Asking himself what subject matter would fascinate young kids, Rimkus believed the answer was NASA. He knew that Key Peninsula



Students experienced a larger than life connection with the NASA astronauts Mike Fincke and Sandra Magnus.

Middle School was a NASA Explorer School. Together, Galaxy Theatres and the school contacted NASA and told them they could have the theatres free for the special event.

Key speakers Bonnie Dunbar, former NASA astronaut and President and CEO of the Museum of Flight in Seattle, Chris C. Kemp, CIO of the NASA Aames Center and honored guest General Shalikavili, a former chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, joined the students at Galaxy. Other dignitaries included representatives of Washington State—Governor Chris Gregoire, Senator Derek Kilmer, and other representatives from major foundations.

"The whole experience was a sensory overload. We had high hopes and we exceeded them," Rimkus said.

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