

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Calling Planet Earth - Space Outreach to the General Public (6)

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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH THROUGH INVOLVEMENT - SGAC'S FIND AN ASTEROID
PROJECT

Abstract

The Near Earth Object (NEO) Project Group (PG) of the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC) is dedicated to help the worldwide planetary defense community to meet one of nature's greatest challenges. The group provides a youth perspective to planetary defense through annual reports, competitions, conference attendance, and public outreach projects related to Near Earth Objects.

This paper will give a brief overview of the Project Group's activities and will focus on the Find An Asteroid (FAA) Search Campaign which was held for the first time in 2012. The Find An Asteroid Search Campaign is aimed to raise awareness about NEOs among the general public, especially the youth and to get them directly involved. The project allowed SGAC teams to participate in an International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC) search campaign to make asteroid observations. SGAC received over 100 individual applications and selected 15 teams from various countries to participate in the IASC search campaign. The teams, working online, received recent telescope images throughout the weeks to analyze them with the Astrometrica software tool, which allows them to spot moving objects. In total, during the five week campaign in summer, SGAC teams have discovered 3 new Main Belt Asteroids, helped confirm 15 discoveries and made several additional NEO observations adding to the refinement of orbital parameters of already known NEOs. Due to the success of the SGAC Find An Asteroid Search Campaign, SGAC and IASC agreed to continue their collaboration by doing an annual search campaign for SGAC teams.

This paper will outline and describe the stages of the SGAC campaign and present the lessons learned of the first edition.