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Call for Submissions to the IYA2009/Mani Bhaumik Prize for Excellence in Astronomy Education and Public Outreach

15 October 2009, Paris: The International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) is soliciting nominations and submissions for the IYA2009/Mani Bhaumik Prize for Excellence in Astronomy Education and Public Outreach.

Thousands of astronomy education and public outreach events are taking place in all countries and organisations participating in the International Year of Astronomy 2009 (IYA2009) throughout 2009. These events and the many professionals, amateurs and volunteers who are organising and implementing them, are helping to fulfil the goals and objectives of IYA2009, and make it the most successful science education and public outreach project ever undertaken. While it is impossible to acknowledge all the activities that have taken place in 2009 and all those who have made them possible, an IYA2009 Prize for Excellence in Astronomy Education and Public Outreach has been established to reward some of the most interesting IYA2009 projects and activities.

The Prize will reward a person, project, organisation or institution that has made a major contribution towards improving public awareness of astronomical achievements, and stimulating the use of astronomy for the promotion of scientific education and culture at large in 2009. *“This prize will recognise the millions of people who are involved in the public understanding and engagement of science, technology and astronomy. It’s a great honour to support the IYA2009, which has helped society at large to better understand the mysteries of the Universe and reassess our place in it”*, explains Mani Bhaumik, who led the development of the excimer laser technology that eventually made Lasik eye operations possible.

Anyone who is involved with IYA2009 activities is eligible for the prize, including astronomers, amateur astronomers, enthusiasts, communicators, educators, any collaborative teams in existence at the time of application, and any others who have made an outstanding contribution to education and/or public communication of astronomy via any medium or activity, during IYA2009. Works in any of the languages of the IYA2009 National Nodes will be also considered, showing the international scope of the prize.

The total sum awarded is 6500 Euros, divided into three prizes, with a winner (3500 Euros) and two runners-up (1500 Euros/each).

“This prize is an excellent way to wrap up the IYA2009 activities and to reward those who took part in the global efforts that made 2009 an unforgettable year for astronomy. It will also encourage future outreach and education activities in astronomy, as an important part of the IYA2009 Legacy”, states the IYA2009 Executive Committee Chair, Catherine Cesarsky.

The results will be announced by the end of January 2010. The prizes will be delivered to the winner and runners-up during the Gala Dinner at the Communicating Astronomy with the Public 2010 Conference in March 2010, in Cape Town, South Africa. The winner will be invited to be present and to give a keynote talk on this occasion.

Further information on the IYA2009/Mani Bhaumik Prize for Excellence in Astronomy Education and Public Outreach may be found at:
www.astronomy2009.org/resources/prize/

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Links

- IYA2009/Mani Bhaumik Prize for Excellence in Astronomy Education and Public Outreach website: www.astronomy2009.org/resources/prize/
- IYA2009 website: www.astronomy2009.org
- Communicating Astronomy with the Public 2010 Conference website: www.communicatingastronomy.org/cap2010/

Notes

The vision of the IYA2009 is to help the citizens of the world rediscover their place in the Universe through the day and night-time skies the impact of astronomy and basic sciences on our daily lives, and understand better how scientific knowledge can contribute to a more equitable and peaceful society.

The aim of the IYA2009 is to stimulate worldwide interest, especially among young people, in astronomy and science under the central theme, "The Universe, Yours to Discover". IYA2009 events and activities will promote a greater appreciation of the inspirational aspects of astronomy that embody an invaluable shared resource for all countries.

The IYA2009 activities are taking place at the global and regional levels, and especially at the national and local levels. National Nodes in each state have been formed to prepare activities for 2009. These Nodes establish collaborations between professional and amateur astronomers, science centres, educators and science communicators in preparing activities for 2009. The International Year of Astronomy 2009 was proclaimed by the United Nations on 20 December 2007.

Dr. Mani Bhaumik is an Indian-born physicist, author, lecturer, entrepreneur and philanthropist. He is a laser physicist who announced the successful demonstration of the world's first efficient excimer laser that later enabled a one-minute procedure known as Lasik, which has helped over fifteen million people worldwide. Dr. Bhaumik's current interest is to share the astounding advances in quantum physics and cosmology with the public and show their implication for our lives, work, technology and development.

For more information

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