

News Release:

Toronto Host to \$2.5 Billion Space Party

For Immediate Release: July 26, 2012

Contact: Jonathan Moneta | jdmoneta@gmail.com

Toronto, ON — NASA's \$2.5 billion, car-sized Curiosity Mars rover will rappel to the surface of Mars in the early morning of Monday, August 6, 2012, in what Bill Nye the Science Guy — an attendee of the Curiosity Landing Party via video link — calls, "a wild way to land." During its descent, dubbed the "[seven minutes of terror](#)", Curiosity will slow itself down with a supersonic parachute and lower itself to the surface with a retro-rocket crane to which it will be tethered. If all goes as planned, Curiosity will be bringing Canadian technology to the surface of the "Red Planet," including the University of Guelph-developed [Alpha Particle Ray Spectrometer](#). This will be an achievement of astronomical proportions. A feat of human engineering and ingenuity. Or, a crazy expensive man-made explosion in space. Either way, it is a reason to celebrate, and, **will we ever**.

To celebrate its landing, 200 space and science fans (and their kids) will turn downtown Toronto's stunning Hotel Ocho into Curiosity's Canadian epicentre of excitement, to watch the live feed from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) mission control, enjoy live events streamed from [Planetfest 2012](#) in Pasadena, battle against each other with interactive landing simulations and design challenges, and toast the landing at the event's Mars-themed bar. Supported by JPL, the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), UofT's Dunlap Institute, The Planetary Society, and Bill Nye the Science Guy®, the event is a space party the likes of which Toronto has yet to see.

"The landing party is also the latest example of the strong grassroots and institutional interest in space and planetary science in Toronto", says event coordinator Jonathan Moneta. Toronto is home to NerdNite, the Dunlap Institute, the David Dunlap Observatory, the Toronto chapter of The Royal Astronomical Society of Canada (RASC), the Ontario Science Centre, and other centres of space science. In the face of dwindling federal funding for planetary science in both Canada and the US, it is organizations and events like these that help promote and demonstrate the public's interest in making space exploration a priority for our countries, and species.

"We're big Carl Sagan fans here in Toronto", says Moneta, "he would remind us that everything on our planet, including us humans, is made of star stuff. Understanding how our solar system and, potentially, life on Mars once evolved brings us one step closer to understanding our universe and our place in it".

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Planetfest 2012 Contact: Lu Coffing | Planetfest Coordinator, The Planetary Society
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Event Details

Main Event | 8pm August 5, 2012 – 2am August 6 – 2012

Kids Event | (ages 5+) 6pm - 8pm

Hotel Ocho | 195 Spadina Avenue

Tickets & full details: www.marsparty.ca

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/events/165261793598623/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/marspartyto>

Great Links

Toronto Event Website | www.marsparty.ca

Planetfest 2012 | www.planetfest.org

Planetfest 2012 News Release | <http://bit.ly/Obwr90>

Seven Minutes of Terror Video | http://youtu.be/Ki_Af_o9Q9s

NASA Curiosity Landing Press Release | <http://1.usa.gov/O3MNib>

University of Guelph's Alpha Particle Ray Spectrometer | <http://bit.ly/sBtOF8>