

## *APPENDIX G*

### *SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS EXPLAINING THE MOON PROJECT*

Dear Parents and Family Members,

Welcome to the MOON Project. We're glad to have you and your child involved.

For the next couple months your child and other children from around the world will be observing the Moon each day and recording those observations. We invite you and your family to join your child in making those observations.

It may not be possible or easy to find the Moon each day. First, you'll need to figure out where and when to look. You may have some ideas yourself about where and when to observe; and your child's teacher will give to your child's class some hints about where and when to look. As time goes by, your child and you will find it easier to predict when and where to watch for the Moon. Please join your child in making these predictions; but please let your child take the lead. That's part of what the MOON Project is about. We want your child to make observations, draw conclusions and make predictions based on those conclusions.

Your child will have a student handbook in which to record observations. Please encourage your child to make entries in the handbook every day. As the days pass, talk with your child about any patterns that seem to be emerging.


Starting in early March, your child will write essays in school about the Moon to share on the Internet with approximately a dozen other children around the world. A university student will facilitate this sharing. For example, your child will write about her or his moon observations, read what the other children have observed, discover worldwide patterns in the data, and develop explanations for those patterns.

This Internet sharing is carried out in a protected environment housed on a Texas Tech University computer. We have built a firewall around this exchange so the only people who can see what your child writes are your child and other children about the same age under the leadership of a college student. Additionally, your child's teacher and the other teachers plus the MOON Project staff can observe the communication. Students are known to each other only by first names; and email addresses and other contact information are not exchanged. Students do not communicate directly with each other. Rather, communication among students is filtered through a college student who is preparing to become a teacher, so your child is working in as safe an environment as is possible.

We also want the children to share ideas about how people in their various communities think about the Moon. They may find that in some places the Moon is quite important but in other locations people rarely think about the Moon. They'll find that classical to contemporary music has been written about the Moon. Indeed, the Moon is the second most frequently written about topic in songs. Some people think of the Moon in a romantic way; others find the Moon to be scary. As ideas about the Moon come to mind, please share these ideas with your child. You may find that the Moon is more prominent in our thinking than we might have believed.

If you have ideas you'd like to share with us about this project, feel free to be in touch with us. My email address is [walter.smith@ttu.edu](mailto:walter.smith@ttu.edu). We want you to feel you're a part of the project.

Thanks for your involvement. We definitely hope you will be immersed in the MOON Project along with your child.



Walter S. Smith