

## Visiting Author Opens Universe to the Visually Impaired

Observatories and planetarium shows are places many people visit to learn about the night sky. But what if you have a different learning style or a physical disability? Does that mean the night sky is not available to you?

The answer is no.

Award-winning educator Noreen Grice will explain why in a free program, entitled Opening Doors to the Universe, on Thursday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at the Welles-Turner Memorial Library (2407 Main St.) Prepare to have fun as you experience different ways to learn about the universe!

In her latest book, *Everyone's Universe* (second edition), Connecticut author Grice describes educational strategies for making space science accessible and engaging for all ages and abilities.

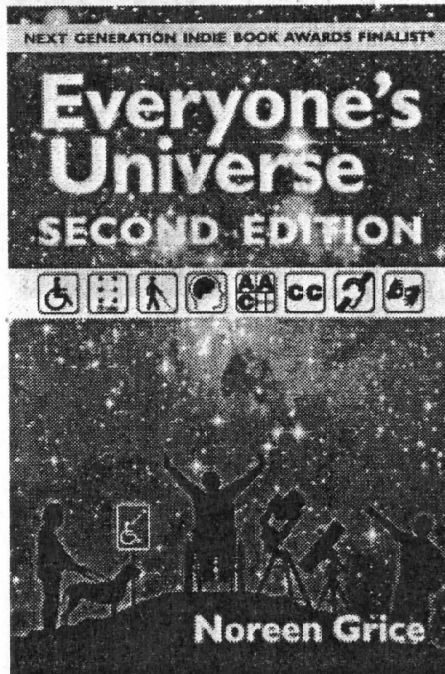
Her book is rated "highly recommended" by the National Science Teachers Association and includes a state-by-state travel guide to accessible planetariums and observatories, with icons, photographs and descriptive text. A book signing will follow the talk.

Noreen Grice is an internationally recognized expert at making astronomy accessible and exciting for people with disabilities. She is founder and president of You Can Do Astronomy LLC and author of six accessible astronomy books including *Touch the Stars* (2002), *Touch the Universe: A NASA Braille Book of Astronomy* (2002), *Touch the Sun: A NASA Braille Book of Astronomy* (2005), *The Little Moon Phase Book* (2005), *Touch the Invisible Sky: A Multi-Wavelength Braille Book*; featuring tactile NASA Images and *Everyone's Universe*.

*Everyone's Universe: A Guide to Accessible Astronomy Places* (second edition) is available in paperback. Published by You Can Do Astronomy LLC, it is 336 pages long and is priced at \$27.95 on Amazon.

Grice's interest in bringing astronomy to the disabled started in 1984 when, as an astronomy major, she was working at the Boston Museum of Science's Charles Hayden Planetarium. A group of blind visitors arrived for a show about the stars.

In the course of the presentation, Grice realized the show wasn't very descriptive to people unable to see. After the show, the visi-



*Everyone's Universe* by Noreen Grice is geared toward the visually impaired and the general reading public—offering the best of both worlds. Grice will present a free program on Thursday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m. at the Welles-Turner Memorial Library.

tors told her they were disappointed.

Instead of being offended, Grice visited the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, MA, and looked at the astronomy books in the library there. The books were in Braille, but had no pictures. She then came up with the idea of creating an illustrated astronomy book for the blind.

The books are intended to be read both by people who can see and those who are visually impaired. The books feature both text and color illustrations in print and in Braille. Her book *Touch the Sun*, for instance, features the sun as a yellow and orange disc with raised ripples representing gas currents on the surface. *Touch the Universe* includes tactile images taken by the Hubble Telescope.