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Mayor Greenberg, Library Foundation announce telescopes and binoculars coming to every library location

Grant brings the wonders of sky and nature closer with new telescopes and binoculars, expands stargazing and birdwatching public programs, and supports STEAM learning.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (April 20, 2026) – On the heels of the historic Artemis II mission, today Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg and the Library Foundation announced that the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) is expanding its popular telescope lending program, adding binocular kits at every library location, and supporting related STEAM programming across the city. The expansion is made possible through a \$35,000 grant from Genentech.

“This investment opens up new opportunities for discovery across our entire city,” said Mayor Craig Greenberg. “Through strong public-private partnerships like this one, we are expanding access to educational resources, supporting families, creating more ways for Louisville residents to reach for the stars and connect with the world around them.”

Originally launched in 2018 with just four telescopes donated by the Louisville Astronomical Society, the program has proven incredibly popular, with more than 400 checkouts and waitlists stretching up to six months. Now, with interest in space soaring after the astronauts of Artemis II helped pave the path for a return to the moon, the addition of 19 new tabletop telescopes and 19 sets of binoculars ensures every library location will have one of each available for public use.

Each telescope and binocular kit is designed to be easy to use and accessible for all ages. Telescopes come equipped with constellation guides, headlamps, and carrying cases. Binocular kits include birdwatching and night sky guides that help patrons explore both above and around them, from backyard birds to distant stars – even the crater on the moon named Carroll in honor of Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman’s late wife.

Programming led by partners Louisville Astronomical Society and Louisville Audubon Society will offer hands-on opportunities for families, students, and lifelong learners to explore astronomy, nature, and science.

“This is about providing access, sparking curiosity, and supporting lifelong learning,” said Heather Lowe, Executive Director of the Louisville Free Public Library. “By placing these tools in every branch, we are giving more people the chance to explore the night sky, engage with science and nature, and experience the library in a new way.”

The initiative builds on the Library Foundation’s broader efforts to expand access to books, materials, and innovative programming across Louisville.

“We’re committed to making sure every neighborhood has access to resources that spark learning and discovery,” said Chandra Gordon, Executive Director of the Louisville Free Public Library Foundation. “This partnership allows us to meet growing demand while continuing to invest in programs that inspire curiosity and connection.”

"Genentech’s legacy is built on the belief that the boundaries of science are meant to be broken. Because our history is defined by explorers who turned the impossible into reality, we are committed to ensuring the next generation of pioneers is as diverse as the patients we serve. By building deep local partnerships and supporting the full K-12 education continuum, we are removing barriers to STEM and empowering students to thrive. Our goal is clear: to ignite a passion for science in every student and build an inclusive future where the hardest biomedical challenges are solved by the brightest minds from every community,” said Shannon Burch, Senior Administrative Business Partner and Site Leader for Employee and Community Engagement, Kentucky Distribution Center of Genentech.

With support from community partners and donors, the LFPL continues to expand its STEAM offerings and create opportunities for residents of all ages to explore new interests, whether that means reading, birdwatching, or looking up at the night sky.

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Louisville Free Public Library connects the residents of Louisville and Jefferson County to knowledge and information at our library locations and on the web at [LFPL.org](https://www.lfpl.org). Come on in, the whole world’s inside.

The Library Foundation strives to ensure every Louisvillian has the tools, resources, and information they need to flourish in their community and their lives by opening the doors for community members to engage with, advocate for, and dedicate time and treasure to the Louisville Free Public Library. Learn more at [LFPLfoundation.org](https://www.lfplfoundation.org).