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## Thames & Kosmos Honored with Two Parents' Choice Awards

(Providence, RI – June 1, 2011) Thames & Kosmos, the Providence-based publisher of high-quality science and technology kits, recently received two awards from the Parents' Choice Foundation. The **Stirling Engine**, a unique solar-powered car and experiment kit, received a Silver Honor, while **Little Labs: Stars & Planets** was awarded with a Parents' Choice "Recommended" seal.

As the nation's oldest nonprofit guide to quality children's media and toys, the Parents' Choice Foundation has cultivated a reputation for seeking out and recommending safe, fun, and socially sound products that help kids grow. Their nationally-renowned award program involves a rigorous evaluation process; only about 20% of submissions receive commendations in any one of the six award levels. Since its establishment in April 2001, Thames & Kosmos has earned over 25 awards and seals from the prestigious foundation.



"The Parents' Choice Foundation's multi-faceted and deliberate approach makes their awards some of the most meaningful honors in the industry," says Thames & Kosmos President, Ted McGuire. "We're proud that we have consistently produced new kits that appeal to and are recognized by such a trusted review organization."

A Silver Honor recipient, the **Stirling Engine** (MSRP \$199.95) is an innovative heat engine that converts solar heat into clean electricity. Like a steam engine, it converts heat energy into mechanical work, which is then converted into electricity through the use of a generator. But instead of water and steam, the Stirling engine uses a permanently

enclosed volume of gas. In this model, a mirrored parabolic dish is used to collect and focus the sun's rays onto a cylindrical glass bulb on the engine. As the air inside the bulb heats up and expands, it activates a piston that turns an electric generator, producing enough electricity to charge a rechargeable battery and power the car model. With this kit, students ages 10 and up can join a global community - which includes NASA scientists! - in exploring how this simple, clean and efficient energy technology is quickly becoming a viable source of electricity. Includes a 32-page, full-color manual.

**Little Labs: Stars & Planets** (MSRP \$16.95), winner of a Parents' Choice "Recommended" Seal, is one of the newest additions to a growing collection of introductory kits designed for young scientists ages 5 to 7 years. The 20-page, full-color guidebook relies heavily on illustrations and has just enough text to reinforce vocabulary and aid in language learning. Each experiment begins with a question: Why is there day and night? Why does the moon have a face? What do the stars do during the day? In this way, students can start to develop ideas about how to explain everyday experiences. Then, using the easy-to-follow pictures, they can perform a series of simple experiments that test their ideas. Because the curiosity and powers of comprehension of children at this age are often more fully developed than their motor skills, adults are encouraged to participate in the journey to outer space and beyond!



Both award-winning Thames & Kosmos kits can be found at specialty toy, hobby, gift, museum and online stores. For a complete list of retailers, visit the Where to Buy page at [www.thamesandkosmos.com](http://www.thamesandkosmos.com).

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**About Thames & Kosmos**

Thames & Kosmos, a privately held company headquartered in Providence, RI, was founded in 2001 with the mission of improving informal science education by creating high-quality science and technology-related educational products for children. Thames & Kosmos places an emphasis on teaching science that is relevant to the important issues in the world today through hands-on experimentation. Topics covered in Thames & Kosmos' line of over 60 kits include alternative energy, chemistry, biology, physics, electronics, natural history, and earth science. For more information on any of the award-winning kits, please contact Kim Hammann at [kim@thamesandkosmos.com](mailto:kim@thamesandkosmos.com) or visit [www.thamesandkosmos.com](http://www.thamesandkosmos.com).