

# Past And Future Of Space Flight Come Together At Space Day 2004

*National Air and Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center Site of Annual Space Day Program*

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CHANTILLY, Va.

Over 1,000 local 6th grade students participated in the international Space Day celebration today at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, VA. The Space Day Foundation and Lockheed Martin sponsored the Space Day 2004 Blazing Galactic Trails event, co-chaired by Senator John Glenn and Vance Coffman, Chairman and CEO of Lockheed Martin, in collaboration with the National Air and Space Museum and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The highlight of the event was the introduction of NASA's new astronaut class.

Space Day is an international initiative established in 1997 by Lockheed Martin that provides educational programs for elementary school students throughout the year in thousands of schools, museums and science centers across North America. Its goal is to use space-related activities to inspire and prepare young people to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

According to Coffman, "As the baby boomer generation looks toward retirement, the demand for young scientists and engineers is expected to increase at almost four times the rate of all other occupations. The Space Day initiative seeks to inspire the next generation to enter this vital career pipeline."

This year's international celebration was focused on motivating young people to pursue science, math and other technical subjects. The ceremony included Senator Glenn, Coffman, General John R. Dailey, Director of the National Air and Space Museum, the Honorable Sean O'Keefe, NASA Administrator and former astronaut Brian Duffy, each of whom related how their own childhood dreams led to careers in aerospace.

According to Dailey, "The Museum is a perfect place to celebrate Space Day because historical artifacts such as the Space Shuttle Enterprise inspire young people to think about the future of space exploration and the many ways they can contribute to this legacy."

The strong focus on technical careers led NASA to decide to introduce the next generation of astronauts at the event. According to O'Keefe, "This astronaut candidate class represents the 'next generation of explorers.' They're the astronauts who will lead our country through the next steps in the new exploration vision. It is a diverse class made up of pilots and engineers who will help us develop the next generation vehicle, scientists who will do research to help humans live and travel in space and three educator astronauts to help ensure that a new generation is ready for the challenges of exploration." During their NASA careers members of this astronaut class may help develop the Crew Exploration Vehicle, study the effects of micro gravity by doing research on board the International Space Station and possibly even help plan the first lunar missions.

At the Udvar-Hazy Center event over a thousand local 6th grade students participated in a wide variety of hands-on activities related to aerospace and science. Activities, sponsored by government agencies, non-profit organizations and private companies, ranged from conducting astronomy experiments to building an SR-71 model.

Winning students in the Space Day Design Challenges were also honored at the ceremony. Developed by the Challenger Center for Space Science Education, the Challenges encourage teams of elementary and middle school students to utilize science and math concepts, initiate independent research and connect directly with experts in the field. The teams had their projects on display at the Udvar-Hazy Center throughout the day and visitors had an opportunity to ask the students questions.

Each year more than 75 national and local corporations, trade associations, federal agencies, youth organizations and school districts participate as Space Day Partners and Associates to facilitate Space Day activities for thousands of students in all fifty states, Canada and some foreign countries.

For additional information about Space Day visit [www.spaceday.org](http://www.spaceday.org)

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