



ORBITER NEWS

News, announcements, and more.

Aerospace Gets Cool Thanks to Take Your Kids to Work Day

April 30, 2024



Hundreds of students and volunteers gathered in Chantilly (pictured) and at Aerospace locations nationwide for TYKTWD 2024.

Smiles shined bright at Aerospace campuses nationwide as hundreds of kids joined their parents and grandparents for Take Your Kids to Work Day (TYKTWD) in late April. This year's event engaged young students who spent the day exploring a career in space thanks to the Aerospace employees who play a vital role in inspiring the next generation of scientists and engineers.

To kick off this year's event, Aerospace President and CEO Steve Isakowitz welcomed kids in person in El Segundo and online at facilities in Crystal City, Colorado Springs, Chantilly and Vandenberg thanking them for joining their families at this year's TYKTWD. Isakowitz reminded kids about the amazing things their parents accomplish every day working at Aerospace and what an exciting time it is to work in space.

"When I was in second grade and I saw an astronaut walking on the moon and I said, 'I want to do that, that is cool,'" said Steve Isakowitz, Aerospace President and CEO.

"I want to build rockets; I want to build satellites. That's what I want to be when I grow up. I chose the Aerospace

Corporation because like I said, we are the biggest helper in the country working with all these companies and different government agencies on it. In some ways we get to work on everything, everything from satellites to rockets to sensors, build things in the laboratory, go to different countries, and do things together, do things that are important to keep those countries safe. I actually think this is the coolest place to work of all the space companies."

This year, more than 380 students participated in Aerospace's TYKTWD, making it one of the most attended TYKTWD to date. In addition to receiving swag bags and limited-edition TYKTWD 2024 shirts, the kids engaged in hands-on STEM activities aimed at inspiring their curiosity and enthusiasm for space, science and engineering.

"It is important for students to get excited about what their parents are doing because they are our future and there is a need for the future generation to get involved in Aerospace," said Lynda Chrisco, Project Coordination Specialist, who helped run the event in Colorado Springs.

Having a Blast

In Crystal City, kids toured the campus where they learned about the importance of aerodynamics through a hands-on activity. They also made stomp rockets and diet coke rockets, having the opportunity to put what they learned to the test. In Colorado Springs, kids were welcomed by Dr. Lara Schmidt, Vice President of Defense Architectures and Integration, and learned about design while making Lego robots. Later on in the day, they gathered around and watched in awe as their baking soda and vinegar powered rockets soared into the sky.

"I think we have some future rocket scientists on our hands," said Britany Washburn, Engineering Manager and lead coordinator for the Colorado Springs event.

The space junk and satellite walking tours were enjoyed by students in El Segundo as well as a STARS Lab talk and activity. Older students had the opportunity to tour the A6 Lab where they learned about microelectronics, radiation, 3D printing and solar cells from various Aerospace experts.

"The earlier we introduce kids to STEM, the more it becomes a normal topic and career path that they will remember as they get closer to choosing their college majors and careers," said Washburn.



After welcoming the kids, Isakowitz answered questions from attendees tuning in from Aerospace locations nationwide.



Learning about chemistry and aerodynamics through hands-on activities was a highlight of the day in Crystal City.

At Vandenberg, kids toured various facilities, including the Falcon 9 and Delta IV Launch Vehicle Launch Support Complex and launch pads. The kids even got to see a Falcon 9 booster and learn more about the important work their parents do every day.

“I didn’t know your job was so cool,” said attendees Ashford and Caleb Brezovic to their dad Joe Brezovic, Senior Project Engineer in Launch Engineering and Operations, who volunteered for TYKTWD.



Attendees like Caleb and Ashford enjoyed visiting the old Delta IV (SLC-6) pad at Vandenberg.

In Chantilly, the egg drop challenge was filled with excitement as kids watched to see if their engineering skills could help ensure their egg would stay intact. Not surprisingly, the ice cream lab—where an Aerospace employee used liquid nitrogen to demonstrate different compound reactions—proved popular and delicious.

“These students will be the next generation of scientists and engineers,” said Alexandra Whitehouse, Conference and Events Specialist, who helped run the event in Chantilly. “If we can get them excited about STEM now, we can encourage them from an earlier age and set them up for success in the future.”

Reaching for the Stars

This year, kids at all locations participated in the Moonshot Mindset Activity, where they completed an activity sheet in conjunction with a video featuring Kara Cunzeman, Systems Director in the Center for Space Policy and Strategy. Throughout the video, Cunzeman spoke about the work she does at Aerospace along with the key steps students need to take in order to have a moonshot mindset of their own. Kids who were unable to attend this year’s TYKTWD are encouraged to watch the [Moonshot Mindset video on Vimeo](#) and enjoy the activity [available here](#).

“I think each and every one of you already has a moonshot mindset inside,” said Cunzeman. “Everyone has the ability to explore and imagine incredible ideas that can change the world and work together to keep going when times get tough.”



Students across various locations, including Chantilly and El Segundo, enjoyed learning the science behind some of their favorite foods.



In Totality: Aerospace Take in Rare Total Eclipse (Photo Gallery)

April 27, 2024

On April 8, a total solar eclipse crossed North America, passing over parts of Mexico, the United States and Canada. While a partial solar eclipse was visible across the entire continent and other parts of the world, millions of people gathered along a narrow path that tracked through 15 states to experience the awe-inspiring phenomenon that is totality.

For roughly four minutes, millions of skywatchers sat in total darkness as the moon completely blocked out the sun from Earth's vantage point.



No surprise, many Aerospace employees made journeys to witness this rare celestial event, sharing the moment with friends, colleagues and other space enthusiasts.

At the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Aerospace President and CEO Steve Isakowitz joined members of the recruitment team supporting Space Workforce 2030 to take part in a NASA Total Eclipse Event presented by Purdue University.

The Astronomy Club, an Aerospace Employee Association (AEA), took 130 club members to Fredericksburg, TX where they observed the solar eclipse together at the Texas Rangers Heritage Center. The Astronomy Club reserved a hotel block, space for viewing within the Ranger's center, and subsidized parking and admission for members. All proceeds were donations toward the Texas Rangers Heritage Center.

"At this location, we were able to experience ~4.5 minutes of totality. Though it looked like the clouds were not in our favor all morning, some sun started to peak through periodically the hour or so before the eclipse," said Alex Gruson, Vice President of the Astronomy Club. "Just in time, there was a break in the clouds over the sun and we were able to view the diamond ring, Bailey's beads, Venus and Jupiter on either side of the eclipse, and totality! With us, we had an H-alpha solar telescope, a solar scope projector, and many members brought their own telescopes and cameras as well."

After the eclipse, most of the members stayed to enjoy a chuck wagon dinner together where they also got to learn about the history of the Texas Rangers. For any questions or interest about the AEA Astronomy club and upcoming events, contact club vice president Alex Gruson (Alexandra.gruson@aero.org).

The total eclipse also coincided with the 39th annual Space Symposium, where Aerospace once again had a prominent presence. All around the country, Aerospace employees didn't pass up the opportunity to catch a glimpse of the total eclipse.









Shining the Spotlight on Volunteers Giving Back

April 25, 2024

To celebrate National Volunteer Month, Aerospace is highlighting volunteerism amongst employees by sharing ways people can get involved with their communities to make a meaningful difference.

Volunteer Month is recognized annually throughout April as a way to encourage giving back to those in need. This year, the Aerospace Cares team is shining the spotlight on just some of the employees who are contributing their time and talents to create a positive impact.



Aerospace volunteers find many opportunities to give back including at the 2024 Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

Aerospacers Nathan Schilling, Talin Ayvazian, Michael Gritz, Cong Vo, Alan Hopkins, Leslie Blackham, Debbi Johnson and Alon Krauthammer have been spotlighted for their volunteerism.

These employees and many others across Aerospace have already logged more than 4,500 hours of volunteering since the start of this fiscal year. While many choose to participate in Aerospace-led volunteer opportunities, like the Holiday Giving Campaign, MLK Day of Service, or at STEM outreach events like VEX Robotics, other employees contribute through other opportunities in their community.

Leslie Blackham, a Member of the Technical Staff in the Space Enterprise and War Fighting Division, is a dedicated volunteer for the Alzheimer's Association "Ride to End ALZ – Colorado". Through her work with the organization, Blackham has spent five years giving back by participating in the charity ride and serving as a member of the volunteer committee working to raise money and awareness for Alzheimer's disease, which affects nearly 7 million Americans each day.

"My favorite part about volunteering is seeing and experiencing the caring and generous nature of people," said Blackham. "Regardless of the volunteer opportunity, I consistently find caring people who are generous with their time."



Leslie Blackham and husband Kevin Blackham at the Ride to End ALZ.

In honor of both Volunteer Month and Earth Day, which took place on April 22, all employees who log volunteer hours in Aerospace Cares from January 2024 through April 2024 will receive a paper seed heart in appreciation for their commitment to making a difference.

Finding the Opportunity to Give

Giving doesn't stop when Volunteer Month comes to an end and community support through volunteerism is needed all year around. In response to this need, the Aerospace Cares team has gathered both short and long-term volunteer opportunities at all Aerospace locations across the country, including opportunities for remote workers. By searching the wide variety of programs available through [Aerospace Cares](#), employees can find a giving opportunity that best fits their availability and interests.



Employee resource groups like Aerospace Military Veterans provided employees the opportunity to volunteer with Wreaths Across America in December.

“When we give our time, it helps the organization fulfill its purpose helping the community and we get to meet like-minded people,” said Cong Vo, a Budget Manager in Corporate Administration and long-time volunteer with [The Mobile Vietnam Memorial Wall](#).

Two upcoming Aerospace K-12 STEM outreach programs that are looking for volunteers are the Herndon Science Competition and Torrance Armed Forces Day. The [Herndon Science Competition](#) is looking for both East and West Coast-based volunteers to help out through a variety of positions, including as a judge for the competition. During [Torrance Armed Forces Day](#), volunteers will team up with U.S. Space Force members to help kids launch straw rockets and learn more about the exciting opportunities in space.

“Volunteering is both a way to give back to your community and a way to raise your spirit,” said Blackham. “By volunteering, you’re performing vital services to help our communities and our fellow citizens live their best lives. It helps us embrace and celebrate our common humanity.”





Space Takes Center Stage at South by Southwest 2024

April 22, 2024

The annual South by Southwest (SXSW) festival held in Austin, Texas, continues to gain a greater reputation as one of the aerospace industry's must-attend events. Indeed, the same internationally recognized creative music and film festival that helps sustain the city's mantra to "keep Austin weird" has extended its ethos to accommodate the rapidly increasing fascination of the possibilities for space.

SXSW is a product both of the creative fuel Austin provides, producing a platform for companies to converge and collaborate, and strengthening the city's position as a growing industrial and innovation hub. In its role as a convener and connector across the space enterprise, The Aerospace Corporation is harnessing that creative and collaborative ecosystem to bridge its government partners with venture capital, startups and commercial space companies who find themselves brushing shoulders at SXSW.

"It's pretty unique to bring all of these space leaders together in the same place, where we can try to work through some of the issues we face in the defense, intelligence, civil and commercial communities in bringing innovative solutions into mission systems," said Dr. Debra Emmons, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer of Aerospace.

Space in Full Swing

More and more, SXSW is becoming an event that offers new avenues for new creative solutions to hard problems, such as connecting artificial intelligence (AI) effectively to meet modern needs and improving acquisition of new technologies. SXSW has created an opportunity for Aerospace's government partners to connect across technology sectors, expanding government awareness and promoting industry collaboration through the connections built during the festival.



Debra Emmons participated in the panel, "Outpacing the Threat: Re-tooling Today's Technology and Using AI to Rapidly Address Tomorrow's Biggest Challenges" with Mike Betzer of Hypergiant, Derek Tourner of the SDA and Rob Mitriveski from L3Harris. [Photo: Kaliana Caldwell]

This year, SXSW served as a meaningful forum for key space leaders to announce new initiatives. AFWERX and SpaceWERX—the innovation arms of the U.S. Air Force and Space Force, respectively—leveraged the SXSW spotlight to unveil the 2024 Strategic Funding Increase (STRATFI) Awards winners during a keynote at Capital Factory, home of AFWERX's Austin Hub.

Industry and government-led panels dissected a number of emerging technologies, including AI applications—a pervasive theme at SXSW. Emmons joined a Capital Factory panel about the use of emerging technology and AI to "outpace the threat" in space, noting the value AI will offer as space becomes increasingly congested over time.

"It is absolutely critical to be able to monitor and track our space assets," Emmons said. "We rely on them for our weather, reconnaissance and national security. This is where AI can help, in terms of algorithm development and greater precision, as the nearly 11,000 satellites we have today are forecasted to double in the next couple of years."

Additionally, SXSW events aimed to recognize groundbreaking technologies and solutions from across space and defense. At the Space and Defense Innovation Showcase – which featured a live, on-stage demo by competing innovators – Aerospace’s Brian Bone, Principal Director of the Commercial Space Futures Office, served as judge of the “Space Technology” category. In addition, Emmons presented the award for “Best Startup Innovation” at the Showcase’s reception.

Telling the Stories of Space

With space at the forefront of SXSW, inclusivity in these discussions was key to bringing ideas and people together. One effort in the movement to foster diverse perspectives, the Space Workforce 2030 (SWF2030) consortium, is a growing coalition of leading companies committed to expanding opportunities for all to ensure the nation’s space industry has the talent it needs to succeed today and into the future.

During the “Branding Space: The Art of Science Communication” panel at SXSW, Sabrina Steele, Executive Director of Aerospace’s Corporate Affairs and Communications, discussed the commitment that SWF2030 companies have made to build a stronger, more dynamic workforce for the space industry.

“What’s different about this initiative is that we’re holding ourselves accountable,” said Steele. “We’re data people. You can tell we’ve been reporting out on how we’ve been doing. In the first year of data, we had eight measures, with a statistically significant improvement in six of the eight areas. We’re going to be reporting out here in April [at Space Symposium] how we’re doing in the second year, so stay tuned.”

Steele joined fellow panelists—moderator Savannah Horton from the Aerospace Industries Association, Brittany Brown of NASA, and Jackie Wattles from CNN—to discuss the importance of effective reporting of elaborate scientific ideas to the public, specifically in the aerospace sector. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words, a point the all-female panel underscored several times with poignant anecdotes, photographs, and their own presence on the SXSW stage.

“A lot of what you need is role models, right?” Steele responded to the packed room. “Look at these amazing women up here.”

SWF2030 was among numerous exciting discussions that SXSW amplified on its prominent stages. Even the festival’s characteristic entertainment slate had a distinct space bend in 2024, as promoters for *Star Trek: Discovery* and Netflix’s awaited *Three Body Problem* adaptation chose SXSW as the venue for their premiers.

“You’ve got creatives everywhere,” said Mike Nemerouf, System Director in Space Systems Architecture for Aerospace. “Whether you’re creative in the film space, creative in the music space, creative in the tech space—SXSW brings all these unique viewpoints together. Making these connections across industries and across disciplines is the recipe for success to breed innovation.”



“Branding Space: The Art of Science Communication” panel featuring Sabrina Steele, Executive Director of Aerospace’s Corporate Affairs and Communications, joined by communication leaders Brittany Brown from NASA, Savannah Horton from the Aerospace Industries Association and Jackie Wattles from CNN.

April 2024 Obituaries

April 01, 2024

Sincere sympathy is extended to the families of:

- **Stephen Burrin**, member of technical staff, hired Feb. 1, 1971, retired Dec. 1, 2005, died Feb. 21, 2024
- **Steven Callaghan**, member of technical staff, hired Nov. 15, 2010, died March 12, 2024
- **Robert Feddes**, member of technical staff, hired Oct. 12, 1992, retired March 1, 2006, died Feb. 11, 2024
- **Josephine Gonzales**, office of technical support, hired Nov. 16, 1964, retired Jan. 1, 2004, died Jan. 6, 2024
- **Carlose Green**, member of technical staff, hired July 3, 2000, died Feb. 21, 2024
- **Robert Hughes**, member of technical staff, hired Oct. 27, 1970, retired Aug. 1, 2013, died Feb. 16, 2024
- **Manabu Nakamura**, member of technical staff, hired March 30, 1964, retired Aug. 1, 1993, died Jan. 1, 2024
- **John Newland**, member of technical staff, hired July 29, 1982, retired April 1, 1995, died Feb. 10, 2024
- **Shirley Shifflett**, office of technical support, hired Oct. 17, 1977, retired Sept. 1, 2003, died Aug. 9, 2023
- **Hugh Weston**, member of technical staff, hired Aug. 21, 1980, retired Dec. 1, 1990, died Oct. 20, 2023
- **Jack Yeatts**, member of technical staff, hired Aug. 10, 1992, retired June 1, 2017, died March 15, 2024

To notify Aerospace of a death and have it included in the Orbiter, please contact People Operations at (310) 336-5107.

These articles are reprinted from The Orbiter, a publication of The Aerospace Corporation 2310 E. El Segundo Blvd., El Segundo, CA 90245-4691 310-336-5000

Visit: Aerospace.org

Contact Orbiter staff: Orbiter@aero.org

www.aerospace.org

