

We Want Our Future!

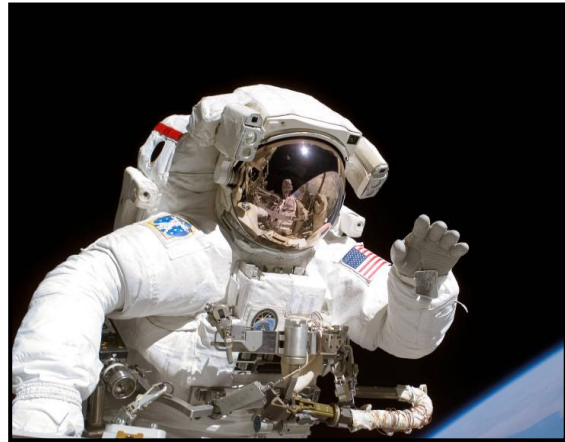
A grassroots space-based outreach/advocacy initiative run by students, for students.

Message from a former astronaut (to be read to the classroom students)

Hello students. My name is Joe Tanner. I have called space my home during four missions as a NASA Astronaut. On one of my missions I traveled on the space shuttle to fix and improve the Hubble Space Telescope. Today the telescope is taking pictures of distant galaxies in our universe. On my last two missions I went to the International Space Station where astronauts from many different countries live and work in space. I installed solar panels that generate electricity to power the station.

Many people think exploration is something that only happened in the past, like Columbus discovering America over 500 years ago. Exploration, however, is happening all the time. In fact, right now astronauts in space are performing scientific experiments and making new discoveries. Exploration is investigation and discovery.

The possibility of space travel was only science fiction when I was born. I was in fifth grade when the first human went into space and in twelfth grade when NASA had rockets powerful enough to allow people to explore the Moon! Now people live in space for months at a time. What's next? How long will it be until humans explore other planets, moons, asteroids or star systems? Today, your class will talk about space exploration and how important exploring in the future is to you. You will be making a postcard so you can tell everyone your vision for the future of space exploration. Remember, when I was born few dreamed that people might actually go into space, yet today people live there!



Video/presentation (if present)

Now here is your special assignment. Pretend that it is as far in the future as you want to imagine. Close your eyes and think really hard about this. Be creative and "crazy" if you want. There are no wrong answers or bad ideas. What is your dream? What do you want this future to look like? On the front side of the postcard draw and color a picture that shows this future. In a few sentences on the other side of the postcard describe your dream for the future and tell why you think space exploration is important.

Thank you for your ideas and your hard work on this assignment. These postcards will help to share your visions of the future with people all around the country. Your ideas, hopes, and dreams will help make a difference. I was able to travel to space because I studied and worked hard in school. My favorite subjects were math and science. Someday you, too, could live in space or maybe even travel to another planet. You can do anything if you work hard, have big dreams, and never give up! Your future depends on you. Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Tanner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Joe Tanner
NASA Astronaut (Retired)

We Want Our Future Initiative Advisor

"This generation does not intend to founder in the backwash of the coming age of space" - John F. Kennedy