

News Release

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Former NASA employee inspires Haller Middle School students to reach for the stars

ARLINGTON- Haller Middle School sixth graders got an up close and personal visit from a former NASA employee on Oct. 29. Dr. James Joki worked for the space agency for 10 years and was a flight controller assigned to Mission Control when Neil Armstrong made his first steps on the moon in 1969.

Dr. Joki talked with the sixth graders about the process they went through at NASA to prepare the astronauts for the moon landing. His job was to test the astronauts' spacesuits and monitor them during the mission. He showed lots of models to the students and played a video of how the spacesuits were tested.

"There's such a focus on space travel right now and it involves a lot of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) education," said Dr. Joki. "My goal when I give these presentations is to stimulate students' minds and encourage them to not give up on their goals."

Dr. Joki had a big impact on the sixth graders. After the presentation, many students wanted to take selfies with him on their phones.

Haller science teacher, Rachel Harrington, arranged for Dr. Joki to talk with the students.

"As NASA prepares to head back to the moon and eventually to Mars, students were able to see where it all started – the Space Race era," said Harrington. "Students have studied the history of the Space Race and will be working towards colonizing the moon and Mars this year, so the content and Dr. Joki's presentation were absolutely perfect!"

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Former NASA employee, Dr. James Joki, talks with Haller Middle School sixth graders on Oct. 29 about his experiences and inspired them to not give up on their goals.