

News Release

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Haller Middle School teacher receives Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award

ARLINGTON- Haller Middle School Science Teacher, Rachel Harrington, received the Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award during the Space Foundation's Space Symposium April 17-20 in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award is given annually in recognition of outstanding contributions to creative and innovative use of technology in education by K-12 educators or district-level education personnel. Every year, The Astronauts Memorial Foundation (AMF), in collaboration with NASA and the Space Foundation, selects a teacher who exhibits extraordinary inspiration for students to learn about Science and Technology in the classroom.

Alan Shepard, one of the nation's original seven Mercury astronauts, was the first American to fly in space, one of only 12 humans who have walked on the moon, and a former AMF board member. The award named after him recognizes excellence, quality and innovation in the development and application of technology in the classroom or to the professional development of teachers.

Harrington was selected based on the annual Mars Day Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) event that she organizes every year at Haller where students problem-solve various challenges as they work to "colonize" Mars.

"Ms. Harrington's Mars Day program caught the eye of our entire selection panel," said Isabel Kennedy, Deputy Director of The Astronauts Memorial Foundation. "One of the most compelling things about her nomination is that her program stretches across multiple grade levels, describing how some local high school students are able to teach her middle school students. Ms. Harrington's program is also extremely duplicatable for teachers from across the nation who want to create a STEM series that is extremely meaningful with little-to-no "high-technology."

“During the field exercises of Mars Day, these students specialize as space scientists, engineers, roboticists, and chemists to colonize the red planet,” said Harrington. “They spend the year researching the work and then come June, they land on the red planet and work collaboratively for long term sustainability on the Martian surface. I am truly honored to receive this award.”

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Haller Middle School Science Teacher, Rachel Harrington, (center) was presented with the Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award on April 17 at the Space Symposium in Colorado Springs, Colorado by Tom Zelibor, CEO of the Space Foundation, and Laura Shepard Churchley, Blue Origin astronaut and daughter of Alan Shepard.