



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

AFA's National Aerospace/STEM Educators:

***What they are doing NOW**

***How this national recognition impacted them**

***Suggestions of online STEM resources for at-home education**

Kaci Heins

Space Center University Director,

Space Center Houston, Texas

2014 National AFA Aerospace/STEM Educator

Kaci Heins is the [Space Center University](#) Director at Space Center Houston, which is the official visitor center for NASA Johnson Space Center. Prior to working in the informal education setting, Kaci was a middle school science teacher in Flagstaff, Arizona. She was a NASA Explorer School teacher, a NASA Solar System Ambassador and a NOAA Teacher at Sea. All of her units and lessons were built on a foundation of



hands-on learning with ties to space exploration. Currently at Space Center Houston, Kaci oversees programs that engage tens of thousands of students and adults in similar experiences that range from overnights at the museum, evening programs, and multi-day programs. Participants may launch weather balloons to 100,000ft in the atmosphere, launch rockets, perform underwater SCUBA challenges similar to spacewalks and test their survival skills in an underwater egress training. Kaci is the recipient of the [2020 Alan Shepard Technology in Education award](#), the [2015 American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Educator Achievement award](#) and was the [2014 AFA National Aerospace/STEM Educator](#).

Currently, Kaci and her team are working to launch four new Space Center University

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multi-day experiences for any student, adult or educator that wants to be a part of the space exploration mission. This includes Space Center University Survival, a parent-child family Space U mission, Flight Operations which ties in the aspects of mission control and a 2-week dual program with Space Foundation in Colorado Springs, CO.

Follow Kaci on Facebook [HERE!](#)

Kaci Heins, on being a National AFA Aerospace/STEM Educator:

I absolutely LOVED my time as an AFA National Aerospace/STEM Educator. It really helped me network with leaders in the aerospace industry and I enjoyed being on the AFA Aerospace Education Council. I was there when they first created the StellarXplorers program, so it has been wonderful to see that develop over the years for students, educators, and mentors. AFA is such a great organization and I'm so grateful to have been a part of it in 2014 and still continue to work with them today. They are instrumental to inspiring the next generation of explorers and empowering amazing educators!



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Kaci's suggestions for STEM resources for at home education:

Space Center Houston Innovation Gateway

<https://spacecenter.org/community-science/>

Make a contribution to research, increase your scientific understanding and immerse yourself in science, technology, engineering and math with our Innovation Gateway community science initiative.

Storytime From Space

<https://storytimefromspace.com/> Learn about science concepts while listening to astronauts read stories from the International Space station!



NASA Space Place <https://spaceplace.nasa.gov/> So much to explore! Resources for all grades, students, and teachers.

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