

**July 2015**

## **Australian Space Camp ambassadors 'thunderstruck'**

Three ASG students and a teacher who is passionate about robotics are about to embark on a week-long journey, sponsored by ASG at the U.S Space & Rocket Center in Alabama.

Nathan Washington, Sarah Callinan and Leroy France along with 2014 ASG NEiTA recipient Michael Harris will be the only Australian representatives to attend International Space Camp. They'll take on the challenges of simulated space missions, rocket launches and also step into the shoes of an astronaut.

The invite-only camp is held each year to encourage international cooperation, with students and educators from at least 10 different countries attending from Saturday 18 July, 2015.

Nathan Washington from John Monash Science School in Melbourne was selected by ASG from a very competitive and talented pool of students, who applied for the Space Camp challenge.

"I am extremely excited but it is hard to even fathom what this experience will be like, as it is such a massive experience, and starkly different to anything I have previously experienced.

I have been interested in exploration since I was a child, whether it be the depths of the Mariana Trench or the gargantuan distance outside of our solar system. I always search for new challenges and learning opportunities in life, and this was one of the most incredible and unique experiences I have ever heard of."

Sarah Callinan from St Ursula's College in Yeppoon Queensland, says she's always been fascinated with all forms of science.

"I've always wanted to be an astronaut and so this is the best and maybe only opportunity I'll have to explore that. When I go I just want to be open to everything and take advantage of this experience. This week, I'm going to try and have a lot of sleep because I know there's going to be a lot of hard work; lots of missions and non-stop action."

They have created a game show called 'Thunderstruck' which they've been rehearsing and will present at the opening ceremony. Sarah says it has a distinctly Australian theme and will quiz the international contestants on Australian slang, trivia and music, with Tim Tams and Vegemite chocolate up for grabs.

Michael Harris, a primary school teacher at Kairi State School in Queensland, chose to attend Space Camp instead of receiving a \$5000 ASG NEiTA professional development grant.

"I have always dreamed of going to Space Camp as a personal interest. Professionally, I am interested in robotics and have some ideas to add to the STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) curriculum at Space Camp. I have also organised to meet some NASA scientists to share my 'disposable robot.'

Mr Harris says he'll also use this opportunity to connect with students and teach remotely.

"It's going to help me as a teacher using social media like Facebook and I've developed my own website for student discussions. We also used Skype to practise our opening ceremony at Space Camp and organise travel, so these skills can be used to connect with remotely located students."

(ends).

**Media contact:**

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**Editors notes:**

*The Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) is a member owned organisation, helping to create educational opportunities for children. ASG has been helping families and their children for more than 40 years. During this time, more than 515,000 children have been enrolled with ASG and more than \$2 billion in education benefits and scholarship payments returned to members. For more information visit: [www.asg.com.au](http://www.asg.com.au).*