

Audio Release

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STAY IN SCHOOL - IT'S A BLAST!

What could be more fun than building a rocket to go to space? NASA engineer Marla Thornton speaks in an audio clip now available about how rocket science really is a blast.

On the eve of the July 30 launch of the Genesis spacecraft on a mission to catch a piece of the Sun, a mission scientist sends a message to students: Stay in school to reach the stars. The audio clip is available for download from the Genesis mission's home page at <http://www.genesismission.org>.

"As a young girl I had a fascination for rockets and space exploration. Outer space was the new frontier," says Thornton in the clip. "So I stayed in school and got involved in science and math. They're a blast!"

Thornton is an engineer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif., and a member of the team that monitors the Genesis spacecraft from the time of launch until its return to Earth in September of 2004.

Genesis will travel to a point between the Sun and Earth, unfold specially designed collection arrays and gather samples of solar wind. After its two-year sunbath, the spacecraft will return these sealed particles to Earth. This will be the first time that scientists will have pristine samples of solar wind, helping them learn more about the chemical composition of the gases and dust that were present when our solar system formed.

Free audiotape copies of the interview may be requested by contacting Jacinta Behne of Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning at 303/632-5605.

JPL, a division of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif., manages the Genesis mission for NASA.

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