



Global Friendship Through Space Education

YEAR 5
ISSUE 11

May 23,
2011

ASTRO

The Partner School Science Program Newsletter

100TH VIDEOCONFERENCE with PARTNER SCHOOL SCIENCE PROGRAM

Everything started with the idea of sending seeds into space and sharing those seeds with two partner schools – one from Turkey and one from the U.S. – to establish roots of



friendship between two schools and countries. But it was just an idea: no formal preparations had been made. We shared this idea with Seran Dumlu from SEV Izmir Elementary School in 2002. Though she knew few specifics, Seran Dumlu liked the idea and said, "I am in the program," with great enthusiasm. We

then needed an American school as a partner and, so, reached out to Pamela Leestma from Bellflower Christian School in LA. Both teachers were full of energy and eager to do something different and international related to space and NASA.

The teams started to work together, found a way to contact NASA, and applied. We were receiving positive feedback from NASA about sending seeds to space. Then the Columbia disaster occurred on February 1, 2003, and NASA postponed all flights for 2 years. It was the end of this dream; however, the teachers and GFTSE team didn't give up and converted this program to the **Partner School Science Program** which you are a part of today.

The main goal of the Partner School Science Program is to bring students together from different countries to work together, exchange emails, and participate in video conferences with one other and NASA.



Our first videoconference between schools happened on June 06, 2003, between Izmir SEV Elementary School (Turkey) and Christian Bellflower School in California. It was a great success, but there were some nerve-wracking, behind-the-scenes experi-

ences I would like to share with you. When we purchased our videoconference machine for Space Camp Turkey, we didn't know anything about it. So, we spent time trying to understand it and test it. We thought we solved all our problems with the machine and that we started to use it properly. The U.S. group got approval from Boeing to use their videoconference facilities. I would like to remind you that in 2003, using webcams and videoconferences was not common, and there was no high-speed internet to have any kind of videoconference, at least in Turkey. It was not easy like nowadays. Everything was okay until the earthquake occurred on May 21, 2003, in Algeria. We lost our access to have videoconferences with those abroad. Therefore, we contacted all phone line providers in Izmir, but they all said there was no problem with the phone lines or the cables under the Atlantic Ocean. We struggled to figure out the problem in one week by talking with many different organizations and people. As we predicted, the optical cables between Europe and America had been damaged by the earthquake. Therefore, we contacted



headquarters in Ankara and asked if they could help us conduct this videoconference for a one-hour time span by making a connection through Germany via satellite. We were not sure if it would work until fifteen minutes before the videoconfer-

ence. However, at the last minute it worked. Having such a large problem and solving this problem to successfully complete our first videoconference was a great learning experience!

The first videoconference on June 6th was the starting point that ultimately led to our 100th videoconference on April 29th, 2011, between Izmir Turk College (Turkey) and Hobgood NASA Explorer School (Murfreesboro, Tennessee) and their dedicated teachers Mrs. Bahar Ergin Faat and Mr. Chick Knitter. During the videoconference, students were able to learn more about U.S. space history, especially about the Apollo program and Saturn V rocket from Mr. Robert "BJ" Jackson, a former NASA employee for over 30 years. Mr. Jackson's presentation space exploration, program and ending with Mr. Jackson worked at

started with the history of beginning with the Mercury the Space Shuttle program. Marshall Space & Flight



Center during the early 60s

with Wernher Von Braun.

Right after Mr. Jackson's presentation, students' surprise party cakes were cut through videoconference as we celebrated our 100th videoconference all together.

Happy 100th videoconference!