National Aeronautics and Space Administration

NASA:

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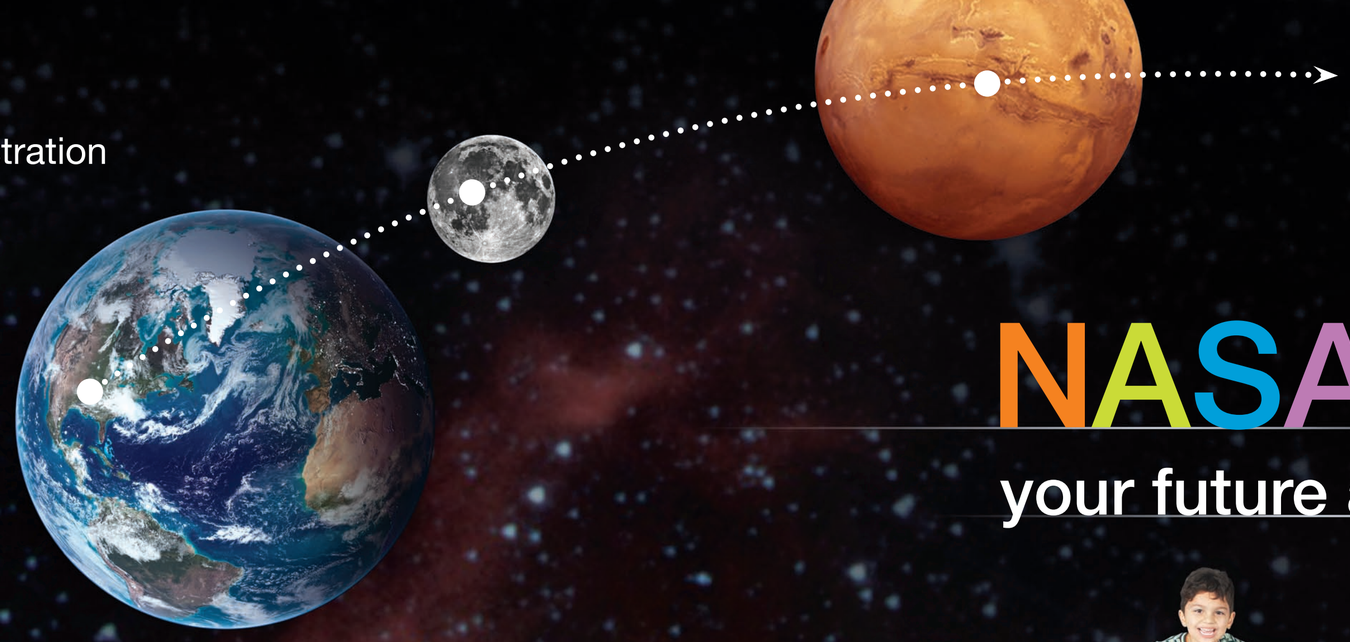

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We want you to be a part of NASA's future!

NASA is made up of talented, hard-working individuals. Their unique skills, backgrounds, diverse life experiences and education paths add to the richness of NASA and its many successes.

Being part of the NASA family presents exciting challenges and extraordinary adventures.

We continue to learn and explore beyond our planet for answers that will inspire the next generation and keep our planet safe.

A few members of NASA's family have shared their stories with us. Read their stories and see that just like you they're all smart, curious, and passionate about inventing our future. Then it's time to write your own story in the space below. Join us and be a part of NASA!

To learn more, please see **www.nasa.gov**

	CHILDHOOD	MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE	EARLY CAREER	CURRENT	FUTURE	
	Al Condes • Grew up in Tucson (AZ) where USAF jets flew over my house every day. I really wanted to be a fighter pilot. • Loved to hunt, fish, play sports. • While at Boy Scout camp, watched Neil Armstrong set foot on the Moon.	• Still interested in aviation. • Spent many hours hiking and hunting in the desert and boating on the Colorado River. • Moved near Washington, DC. Became aware of the importance of international relations.	• Studied political science. Became a NASA cooperative education student. It changed my life! • Awarded NASA scholarship. • Obtained Master's degree working at NASA during the day and attending graduate school at night.	• NASA Contract Specialist for international procurements. Frequently traveled overseas. • Became an International Relations Specialist. Worked with Russia on Shuttle-Mir flights and the International Space Station, as well as Europe, Japan, and Canada.	**Deputy Assistant Administrator** • NASA's Deputy Assistant Administrator for External Relations. • Senior NASA liaison with foreign space agencies around the world and other U.S. government agencies. • Oversee NASA's Export Control and History programs.	• Coordinate with space agencies from around the world to explore the Moon, Mars, and beyond. • Work with new partners in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. • Have fun at work with new and interesting challenges every day!	
	Pedro Rodríguez, Jr. • Born in Huntsville (AL); family from Puerto Rico. • Dad was a NASA engineer. • Saw a Space Shuttle launch and will never forget the rumble I felt in my chest! • Good at puzzles and math. • Played trumpet and violin.	• Played basketball, soccer, and drums in a band. Made many life-long friends • Good at math, especially geometry, but didn't enjoy it. • High school art teacher helped me become the artist I am today.	• Attended the University of Alabama in Huntsville where I earned my Bachelor's degree in graphic design. • During school I worked for the local paper, *The Huntsville Times*, and the local website, *al.com*.	• Working on the newspaper taught me about deadlines and time management. I still owe a lot to that first job. • Moved to the internet world, transferring my design skills from print to the web.	**Graphic Illustrator** • Graphic illustrator at Marshall Space Flight Center, working on everything from business cards to large banners. • Use design and layout skills to help our team win work like developing the Ares launch vehicles.	• I hope to maintain my design skills throughout my life • I would like to get back to my first passion, which is working with dogs. • I would like to travel some more and possibly become a brewmaster.	
	José J. Matienzo • Grew up on the beach in Puerto Rico, flying kites and paper airplanes. Lived on the 22nd floor of a high-rise so I would try to make the paper airplanes and model rockets fly all the way to the ocean.	• Class clown with straight "A"s. • Good at math, languages, baseball. Hated history. Enjoyed logic problems. Built model cars and airplanes. • Attended military school in Alabama. Spent some scary nights not knowing any English.	• Pre-med. Saw my first cadaver. Switched to aerospace engineering. • Lost my mother after my first year of school so worked extra jobs to pay for school. • Thought of being a banker. • Co-op job from NASA changed my life.	• Did structural analysis on Space Shuttle engines, boosters, and external tanks. • Couldn't be an astronaut myself, but I trained them in the Neutral Buoyancy Simulator. • Worked with the Italian Space Agency.	**System Engineer** • System engineer developing expendable launch vehicles for NASA spacecraft. • Mentoring and speaking to students at conferences like the "Alcanzando Metas" and Alabama Hispanic Youth Conferences.	• Want to support the Shuttle through its final missions to the Space Station. • After that I am planning on helping the development of our next heavy lift vehicle that will carry cargo to the Moon and beyond.	
	Jaqueline M. Cortez • First generation Mexican-American. Grew up in Pasadena (TX), a Hispanic community. • Oldest of 3 siblings, who joke calling me their second mom. • Come from a very large family; my father had 13 siblings and my mom had 8.	• Never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up, but considered being a marine biologist or child psychologist. • In senior year accepted into a NASA student program; in school ½ the day and at work the rest of the day.	• First in my family to attend and finish college. • Started at local community college (close to home and affordable). Earned Bachelor's degree in Management and Marketing. • Later received Master's degree in Cross-Cultural Studies.	• NASA secretary. Worked weekends in a grocery store. • Worked full time and went to school full time. • Promoted to Contract Specialist and now to Business Specialist, Education and Outreach Lead.	**Business Specialist, Education and Outreach Lead** • Encouraging students to pursue careers in math, science, engineering. • Leading elementary projects, while targeting the Hispanic community. • Realize the importance culture plays in a community as I seek to educate and inform.	• Plan to continue my education, while researching the impact of culture on education, specifically for first generation students. • Become a non-profit founder. • Pursue photography. • Create documentaries.	
	Alma Stephanie Tapia • Raised in El Paso (TX); parents from Argentina and Colombia. • Learned English as a second language; had a hard time learning how to read. Math and science were easier. • 4th grade teacher got me interested in science and exploration.	• Science fairs, orchestra, track, dance. Took AP courses. • Hated math; failed a lot of classes. Thought math was useless until I realized it explained science! It became one of my favorite subjects. • Introduced to engineering.	• Studied metallurgical and materials engineering. First in my family to graduate from college. • Photography, dance, music. • Received MS degree working with some very cool materials that can get very hot (high temperature alloys).	• Landed my "dream job" as a NASA materials engineer. • My identical twin also works at NASA. We still compete in a good way: If one was good at something, then we figured that as twins, the other had to be able to do it just as well.	**Materials Engineer** • Work with materials going into space. If equipment breaks I study it closely with some pretty awesome microscopes to figure out why it broke — so it won't happen again. • Still do photography and perform on a Latin dancing team.	• Testing materials for space suits and the ORION spacecraft. • Making a career at NASA and contributing to making space exploration possible. • Continue to feel awe that you only remember having as a kid for the work we do here at NASA.	
	Monsi Cerezo Román • Born and raised in Puerto Rico. • Liked science, especially biology and working with animals. For science fairs, enjoyed designing experiments no one had done before (or so I thought!). • Did not like math class.	• One of only 100 kids accepted to a new science and math school. Commuting and curriculum were hard, but I was expected to do well, so I did. • Learned to think "out of the box" and was encouraged by teachers to spread my science wings!	• Few women were pursuing science careers. Had no mentors or role models but took a risk following my interest in research. • BS in biology. • Worked in microbiology research lab. • MS in microbiology. • Became more fluent in English.	• Microbiologist for the International Space Station Environmental Control and Life Support System. • Currently Project Manager overseeing technologies to provide clean air and water to people who will be living on the Moon for long periods of time.	**Microbiologist** • My work and life have been about learning to live in places other than where we grew-up. As a scientist and a Hispanic woman, I hope to be an example for others. • Encourage students to pursue careers in math and science by mentoring and speaking at schools.	• Watch astronauts live on the Moon and Mars, breathing clean air and drinking pure recycled water. • See our technologies help people on Earth. • Be a grandmother, and like mine was, be an important part of my grandkids' life!	
	Ellen Ochoa • Grew up in La Mesa, California. • Hail to the Chief: "When I was in the fifth grade, I wanted to be president." • Enjoyed school, interested in music, math, and science.	• Subject she loved: math (which lead to interest in science later) • Earned recognition as a fabulous flutist. • Graduated at the top of her class.	• College: Physics, San Diego State University. Switched from music and business to physics. • Grad school: Electrical engineering, Stanford University. Considered becoming an astronaut after Sally Ride made it.	• Worked at Sandia National Laboratories, developing optical systems. Have three patents. • Worked on computer systems at NASA Ames Research Center. • 10, 9, 8… became astronaut in 1991.	**Deputy NASA Center Director** • Have flown in space four times. Operates robotic arm. Favorite part is being weightless, "It's something you miss back on Earth." • Plays flute and volleyball. • Not weightless, but…enjoys being a private pilot.	• "I'm not trying to make every kid an astronaut, but I want kids to think about a career and prepare." • Wants to get kids excited about math and science.	
	Michael López-Alegria • Born in Madrid, Spain. • Moved to California. Father spoke English (except when really mad). • Played astronaut in bedroom closet space capsule. • At the beach when Apollo 11 landed on the Moon; even waves seemed to get quiet.	• Had great teachers in math and science; liked both very much. • Chess and math clubs. • Got better at sports; soccer (goalie) and track & field (pole vault). • Played drums in a (bad) garage band. • Wanted to be an architect.	• U.S. Naval Academy. Studied Systems Engineering; difficult but rewarding. Wish I'd taken more advantage of the opportunities there. • Time on board a Navy ship, a submarine, and in an aviation squadron. • Wanted to be a pilot.	• Naval flight school. • Learned a lot more about flying as an instructor. • MS in Aeronautical Engineering. • Flew 30+ kinds of airplanes. • Engineering test pilot and program manager. • Selected as Astronaut Candidate in 1992.	**Astronaut** • Flew a Soyuz and 3 Space Shuttle missions. • 7 months on ISS as Commander. • First Hispanic to walk in space; 67+ hours "outside" on 10 space walks. • Assistant to Director for ISS, Flight Crew Operations.	• Hope to find a way to contribute to making the world a better place.	
	Franklin Chang Díaz • Born: San José, Costa Rica. • Childhood in Costa Rica and Venezuela. • Dreamed to be an astronaut.	• An average student, nothing special. • A good athlete (track and field). • Built rockets and experimented with physics. • Wanted to be an astronaut.	• Came to USA to become an astronaut. • University of Connecticut (mechanical engineering) and MIT (plasma physics). • Research in thermonuclear fusion. • First conceived the VASIMR® rocket.	• Research in fusion power at Draper Laboratory. • Became an astronaut in 1981. • Flew 7 missions in space. • Developed the VASIMR® rocket.	**Astronaut / Entrepreneur** • Founded Ad Astra Rocket Company. • Developing first flight test of the VASIMR® engine on the ISS. • Still wants to be an astronaut.	• Still planning to be an astronaut (even if he has to make his own rocket).	

About Me

Map out your past and your future—in ANY way you'd like. Here are some ideas to get you started.

You might want to include:

- Hobbies
- Sports
- Math classes
- Science classes
- Personal goals
- Things you want to work on

Way you might want to fill in your timeline:

- Write
- Draw
- Paste photos
- Use icons

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER	MIDDLE SCHOOL	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE & GRADUATE SCHOOL	MY CAREER

LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR FUTURE AT NASA BY VISITING THESE SITES ON THE WEB:

Opportunities for Students
http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/studentopps/employment/programs.htm

Jobs at NASA
http://nasajobs.nasa.gov

Becoming an Astronaut
http://nasajobs.nasa.gov/astronauts/default.htm

Spanish Language NASA Sites
http://www.nasa.gov/about/highlights/En_Espanol.html

Learn about the future of our space program at:
www.nasa.gov/exploration

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