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who was Sally Ride?

Dr. Sally Kristen Ride was a physicist, astronaut, educator, and advocate for young people in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Best remembered as the first American woman in space, Ride's tenure as an astronaut was but one chapter in a long and impactful career.

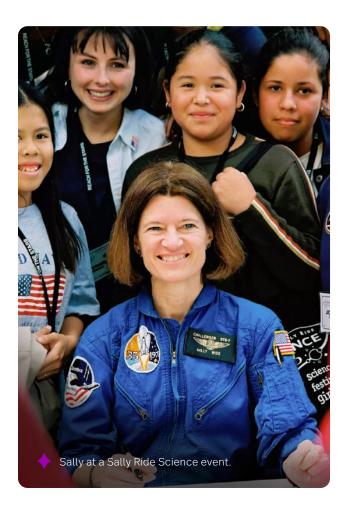
Dr. Sally K. Ride was born in Encino, California, on May 26, 1951, to Joyce and Dale Ride. Curiosity about the world was a defining feature of her childhood. Ride and her younger sister Bear often did science experiments at home with their microscope kit. They also enjoyed looking at the stars through their telescope together.

As a high school student at Westlake School in Los Angeles, Ride excelled in the classroom and on the tennis court, where she was captain of the tennis team. She especially enjoyed her calculus and physics classes and decided to major in astrophysics in college. In the fall of 1968 Ride began her studies at Swarthmore College outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She loved physics, though the classes were challenging, but ultimately left Swarthmore to explore the possibility of a professional tennis career. Ride decided that science was the path forward. In fall 1970, she transferred to Stanford University, where she double majored in physics and English literature. She studied at Stanford for eight years, earning bachelor's degrees (1973), and a master's degree (1975) and doctorate (1978) in physics. As she neared graduation, Ride learned that NASA was recruiting mission specialists – scientists who would conduct experiments on the new Space Shuttle. "I could do that," she thought, and sent in an application. Her expertise as a physicist and the skills she learned on the tennis court were some of the qualities that made Ride a strong candidate.

On June 18, 1983, Dr. Sally K. Ride became the first American woman in space.

Sally Ride in the flight deck of Space Shuttle *Challenger* on the STS-7 mission (1983).

SALLY'S NIGHT CELEBRATION GUIDE



Ride was accepted to the astronaut corps in 1978 as a member of Astronaut Group 8 – NASA's first astronaut class to include women. For a long time, the space program and the public thought that women were not suited to spaceflight. On June 18, 1983, when Ride became the first American woman in space, she challenged long-held stereotypes about who would make a good astronaut. Ride spent more than two weeks in space over the course of two missions, STS-7 and STS-41G. Ride operated one of the Space Shuttle's most important tools – the robotic arm – and loved taking photos of Earth from space.

When Ride retired from NASA in 1987, she dedicated herself to educating and inspiring learners. For more than 18 years she taught physics at the University of California San Diego. In 2001, Ride founded Imaginary Lines (now Sally Ride Science) with her partner, Dr. Tam O'Shaughnessy, to inspire girls and young women to explore science careers.

Ride continues to be a role model for many people around the world, even after her death in 2012. In 2013 she was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 2013, Dr. Tam O'Shaughnessy accepted the **Presidential Medal of Freedom** on behalf of her partner, Dr. Sally Ride.

mage Credits: op: Sally Ride Science ottom: NASA Photo by Carla Cioffi

WHAT IS Sally's Night?

Dr. Sally K. Ride lived her life with extraordinary energy, passion, curiosity, and joy. Whether in the classroom or on the tennis court, in the lab or on the launch pad – it was clear from the start that she would reach great heights.

Sally's Night honors Dr. Sally Ride's incredible legacy as a physicist, astronaut, educator, and advocate for young people. We celebrate Sally's Night on or around the anniversary of one exciting episode of Ride's extraordinary life, the night she looked back at Earth as the first American woman in space, on June 18, 1983.

As a role model to people around the world, Ride believed that "you can't be what you can't see." The continued underrepresentation of women in STEM fields means that young people have fewer role models. Sally's Night introduces a new generation of learners to incredible women and people of underrepresented genders – past and present – as inspiration for the many ways they can cultivate a passion for science. Every June, the National Air and Space Museum invites everyone, everywhere to join Sally's Night. Whatever your passion, celebrate how science helps you shine. Whoever you are – but particularly young people who don't yet see themselves reflected in their dreams – celebrate and share what about space and science brings you energy, passion, curiosity, and joy. We hope the activities in this Celebration Guide inspire you to dream big and find your passion like Sally Ride.

Sally's Night honors Sally Ride's **incredible legacy** as a **physicist, astronaut, educator,** and **advocate** for young people.

A fan tries on a spacesuit glove at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum's Sally's Night celebration at Nationals Park on June 12, 2022.

Image Credit: National Air and Space Museum Photo by Jim Preston

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EVEN



The first six women to join NASA's astronaut corps, pictured here in 1978, all held advanced degrees in science, engineering, or medicine. Clockwise from top left: Drs. Kathryn Sullivan, Shannon Lucid, Anna Fisher, Judith Resnik, Rhea Seddon, and Sally Ride.

Image Credit: NASA

Look Up and Find a Planet

Sally Ride was fascinated with space – she even studied it in school! You can explore space by just looking up and observing the Moon, stars, and even planets! No matter where you are on Earth, at some point during the year you will be able to see planets in your sky. Sometimes it can be hard to tell planets and stars apart. Which direction should you look? How high up? Follow this quick guide to find a planet!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Your eyes
- A view of the sky at night

INSTRUCTIONS

Look for something bright.

The five brightest planets in our night sky (Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, and Mercury) will be brighter than most of the stars around them. Venus will be the brightest of all. Venus is our next-door neighbor in space and its runaway greenhouse effect causes its atmosphere to reflect a lot of the Sun's light toward Earth. It may even look like a bright airplane near sunset or sunrise, but it isn't actually moving. Because of when it appears, Venus is often called the "morning star" or "evening star."

Look for something that doesn't twinkle.

Stars are so far away that they look like tiny, bright points of light to our eyes. Before reaching us, starlight first shines through Earth's atmosphere. The atmosphere has moving layers of air, which cause the light to bounce around as if you were looking above pavement on a hot day. That is why stars appear to dance around a little, or twinkle. Planets in our solar system are much closer, so they look like tiny disks to our eyes instead of points. Their light comes through the same moving atmosphere, but the light bounces around within its own disk. Therefore, planets usually appear to be steady lights that don't twinkle.



SALLY'S NIGHT CELEBRATION GUIDE

Look for something that is in the same path in the sky as the Moon and Sun.

No matter what planet you're looking for, they will always appear near the same part of the sky-the same path that the Moon and Sun follow every day as the Earth rotates. This path in the sky is called the "ecliptic," or the plane of our solar system. All of the planets in the solar system lie along this plane. Though the height of the ecliptic will change depending on the time of year, just find where the Moon or Sun is in the sky-this is where you should look for planets.

Now you are ready to go and find a planet!

The best time to find a planet is right after sunset or before sunrise. How can you tell which planet you are looking at? Consult a sky map, download a sky app, or ask a friend! Look for something in the same path as the Moon and Sun in the sky.

In this simulated sky, we found Saturn and Jupiter!



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Moon

Jupiter

Measure the Distance to the Moon

Many people have studied the Moon over time. Sally Ride guided the GRAIL MoonKam project, through which students were able to take pictures of the Moon from a special spacecraft and study those images in the classroom or at home. Over 100 years before the MoonKam, other scientists, like Mary Fowler, were also studying the Moon. You can follow in their footsteps and study the Moon with these simple steps!

Mary Fowler helped estimate a very precise distance to the Moon in the 1910s by studying the position of the Moon in photos taken over many months in different locations on Earth. You can calculate a rough estimate of the distance to the Moon just by knowing the diameter of the Moon, and using your own thumb and arm as a measuring device.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Measuring tape
- Something to take notes on
- Your body

Distance to Thumb Length of Thumbnail Distance to Moon

Diameter of Moon

INSTRUCTIONS

Find the Moon in the sky.

Outstretch your arm and hold up your thumb, comparing it to the Moon. Adjust where your hand is until your thumbnail just covers the diameter of the Moon.

Have a friend or family member use a measuring tape to measure the distance from your eye to your thumb in that position, then also measure the length of your thumbnail. Write down both of these measurements.

Now we can use geometry to work out the distance to the Moon knowing the Moon's diameter is 2,159 miles across. First divide the distance to your thumb by the length of your thumbnail to find the ratio for the right triangle. Now multiply that number by 2,159 to approximate the distance to the Moon in miles. The answer is below this helpful graphic.



Answer for June 18, 2023: 246,312 mi

How close were you? How could you improve this experiment to make it more accurate?

SALLY'S NIGHT CELEBRATION GUIDE



Image Credit: Graphic Adapted by Sofia Soto Sugar

Launch Into Space

Sally Ride's first flight to space in 1983 took her all the way into orbit around Earth – which takes a lot of energy! Scientists and engineers build rockets with enough energy to fight against Earth's gravity, which pulls things back down toward the ground. Try this simple experiment to learn what it takes to launch astronauts like Sally Ride off of Earth.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- A small ball
- A place where you can throw the ball safely

INSTRUCTIONS

Try holding the ball straight out in front of you and letting it go.

What happens to the ball? It falls straight down! That is because of Earth's gravity, which pulls everything toward it – and keeps us from floating away!

Pick up the ball, and this time, toss it in front of you.

What happened to the ball this time? It went farther! That's because you added energy, causing the ball to travel in a direction at a speed (we call this velocity)! However, gravity still pulled it down to the ground.

Now, imagine your ball is a spaceship, with astronauts like Sally Ride strapped in and ready to launch.

That spaceship is being pulled to Earth by gravity, so it would need a LOT of energy to make sure it doesn't fall back to Earth. Just like the big engines on the Space Shuttle and other launch vehicles, we have to add a lot of energy to the ball we throw to help fight the pull of gravity. How much energy can you give the ball? Enough to launch it to space? Try it out!



See a video on how to do this activity on our How Things Fly webpage. Sally Ride went to space for the first time on board Space Shuttle *Challenger* on the STS-7 mission.

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Become a Nature Photographer

Sally Ride went to space – and looked back at Earth. She was passionate about protecting our planet, combating climate change, and celebrating the world we have all around us. She worked on a special project, EarthKam, to help kids take pictures of Earth from space! She even wrote the book *Mission: Save the Planet* with her partner, Tam O'Shaughnessy.

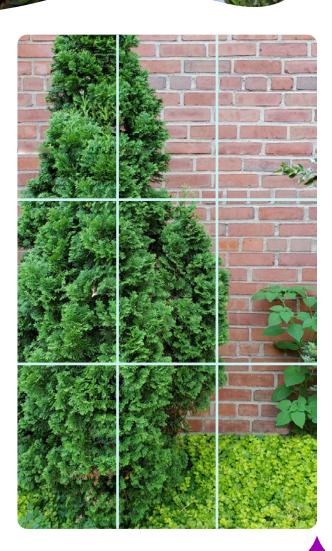
Taking pictures of Earth can be both a science and an art. Try these photography techniques to capture and share the beauty you find in the world around you.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

• A camera, like the one on a phone

INSTRUCTIONS

- Head outside and look for objects that interest you, from big to small. Entire fields or forests, individual trees or rocks, or even small bugs and plants can make great candidates for photos.
- Look for different textures, light, and shadows. Finding a good mix of these elements can make for an interesting composition.
- Choose whether you want to take a picture close up or from far away. Close up can show a lot of detail; from far away, you'll capture many different things and can create a scene.
- Compose the picture in thirds. Imagine two equally spaced lines going up and down across your view, and two equally spaced lines going side to side across your view. Where the points of those lines intersect, especially in the middle band, is a good place to position your primary object to make the image pleasing to the eye.
- Take a picture or a series of pictures. A series of pictures can help you tell a story – you can take a series of pictures of the same object over time, or include multiple subjects.
 - Share your photography with your friends and family, and with all of us on social media using #SallysNight!



Measure a Star like a Computer

From the 1880s through the 1950s, women worked at the Harvard College Observatory as "<u>computers</u>." This was before electronic computers – back then, the word meant a person who did math calculations. The Women Astronomical Computers were a remarkable group of astronomers who made many groundbreaking discoveries about our universe. They developed systems for categorizing stars that we still use today, and they were among the first women to work professionally in the field of astronomy.

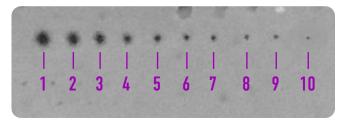
One of the Women Astronomical Computers' jobs was to measure a star's brightness, or magnitude. They did this by carefully studying photographs of the night sky that were taken with powerful telescopes. The images were printed on large glass plates and had hundreds of tiny stars, so the work was difficult and required sharp eyesight. The brighter a star, the larger its dot appeared on the glass plate. Confusingly, smaller magnitude numbers are used to describe brighter stars (a Magnitude 1 star is brighter than a Magnitude 6 star).

To measure a star's magnitude, women astronomers created a tool they called the "flyspanker," which looked like a flyswatter but smaller. The flyspanker was made with a wire taped to a cut-out piece of glass plate, which showed stars of different magnitudes. By holding the flyspanker up next to a star on the larger glass plate, the women could compare the dots and measure the magnitude of the star based on its size. Now you can do it too!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Access to a printer
- Tape and scissors
- A small piece of wire or stick, such as a toothpick





Cut out the annotated flyspanker above to use in the activity.

The Women Astronomical Computers at work at Harvard College Observatory.

Image Credits:

Top right: Harvard College Observatory's Astronomical Photographic Glass Plate Collection at the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian Bottom: Harvard University Archives

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INSTRUCTIONS



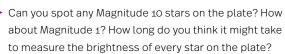
Print out this page with the photo plate image and flyspanker piece (on page 12).

Cut out the flyspanker piece and tape it to a small stick for you to hold.



Now choose a star on the larger glass plate image.

Hold your flyspanker next to your chosen star and see which dot on the flyspanker is the closest in size to that star. The number next to that dot will tell you the star's magnitude!



A glass plate photograph of the night sky, including the three bright stars of Orion's belt.

Image Credit: Harvard College Observatory's Astronomical Photographic Glass Plate Collection at the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian

Create Your Own Eclipse

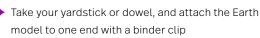
Eclipses are exciting events in the sky when either the Sun or Moon gets blocked or darkened. They happen because of how the Moon travels around the Earth and sometimes lines up with the Sun. But since the Moon completes an orbit around the Earth once per month, why don't we get an eclipse every month? It turns out that because the Earth and Moon are so far apart, it's hard to get them lined up perfectly to create an eclipse! You can demonstrate that alignment by making your very own model eclipse.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

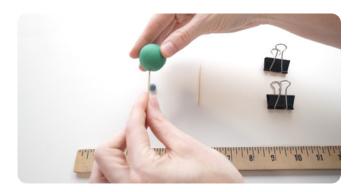
- Yardstick, or a dowel about 3 feet long and a measuring tape
- Some clay, or a ping-pong ball 1 inch wide and a round bead ¼ inch wide
- 2 toothpicks or small sticks
- 2 binder clips
- Tape or glue
- A flashlight or a clear sunny day

INSTRUCTIONS

First, make the Earth and Moon pieces for your model. If you're using clay, make a ball 1 inch wide to be the Earth and a ball ¼ inch wide to be the Moon. Then gently stick a toothpick into each ball. If you're using a ping-pong ball and bead, attach a toothpick to each one using glue or tape.



Measure 30 inches away from the Earth ball using your yardstick or measuring tape, and attach the Moon ball there with the other binder clip. Your model now represents the average distance between the Earth and Moon if they were this size.







Take your model outside on a sunny day, or have someone shine a flashlight toward you. Hold the model so the stick points toward the Sun or flashlight, with the Moon ball closer to the light, and try to line up the Earth ball so that the Moon's tiny shadow lands on it. It's difficult! Even though the real Earth and Moon feel pretty big to us, they are much smaller than the space between them, and they very rarely line up with the Sun exactly. That's why we only see eclipses a few times per year.

• If you can get the Moon ball's little shadow onto the Earth ball, congratulations! You've created a solar eclipse! If there were tiny people standing on that shadowed part of the Earth ball, they would look up toward the Sun and see that the Moon ball was blocking it. That's the same thing we see from Earth during a real solar eclipse: the Moon gets right in front of the Sun and blocks its light for a few minutes.

Solar eclipses aren't the only kind of eclipse that we see in the sky. There are also lunar eclipses, when the Moon gets darkened because the Earth is blocking the Sun's light. You can create a lunar eclipse by turning your model around so that the Earth ball is closer to the light source.

Try to line up the two balls again, this time with the shadow of the Earth ball making the whole Moon ball go dark. You might find this task a little easier than making a solar eclipse, because the Earth's shadow is bigger. During a real lunar eclipse we see the Earth's dark shadow spread across the Moon, almost like a cookie with a bigger and bigger bite taken out of it.



If you want to see a real eclipse, you can <u>look up when one will</u> <u>be visible</u> from where you live!







Sew a Spacesuit Glove

Before astronauts can wear their protective spacesuits, they must be sewn together, similar to the clothing you wear! Did you know that a team of talented seamstresses sewed together the Apollo spacesuits that kept astronauts safe on the Moon?

Modern spacesuits are made from many different layers of materials, at most 16 layers. The layers are made of different materials that are chosen based on the function they provide. These functions include reflecting light, protecting astronauts from micrometeorites, or creating a comfortable temperature environment within the spacesuit. Each layer is necessary for a safe and comfortable walk in space.

An astronaut's glove is specially made to fit their hands. The body part that feels the coldest on a spacewalk is the fingertips. Because of this, there are heaters in an astronaut's glove to help keep their hands warm while they perform their tasks, but allows them to move their fingers.

In this activity, sew together a glove of many layers to play with!

Please note: This activity is intended for younger learners (ages 8 and under).

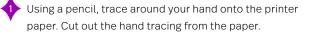
WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Mylar (can get from balloons or chip bags)
- Thin craft foam paper sheets (1 per person)
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Glue stick
- Yarn (or shoe laces)
- Tape
- Pencil
- Printer paper



INSTRUCTIONS

Creating parts of the glove



- Use the glue stick to glue the hand tracing to the mylar sheet.
- 3 Cut around the hand tracing.
 - Place the hand tracing onto the craft foam sheet.
 - Draw a mitten on the foam that goes around the hand tracing. Cut the mitten out of the foam. Make two mittens.





Putting the glove together

- Use the hole punch to punch holes around the hand tracing, making sure each finger tip is hole punched.
- Place the hand tracing on mittens and mark where the holes should go on the mittens.
- Hole punch the mittens based on the marks.
- Thread yarn into a hole near the wrist and knot the end.
- Cover the other end of the yarn in tape to create an aglet, like you see on the end of shoelaces, to help thread it through the holes.
- Sew your glove by passing the yarn through the punched holes!







Astronaut Jessica Meir pauses during her 7-hour spacewalk to wave at the camera. Meir and Christina Koch (not pictured) worked to replace a battery outside of the International Space Station on the first all-woman spacewalk, October 2019.

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Dance like an Exoplanet

Did you know that all planets "dance" around their stars? Everything in space is moving, including <u>exoplanets</u>, which are planets around stars other than our Sun. They spin on their axis like a twirling dancer and orbit around their stars like people moving around a dance floor.

Astronomers such as <u>Natalie Batalha</u> use these motions to find and study exoplanets, with the help of telescopes like <u>JWST</u> and <u>TESS</u>. Learning about these motions can tell scientists a lot of information, such as how big or small an exoplanet is or how close or far an exoplanet is from its star. Now you can make your own dance inspired by these far-away worlds!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

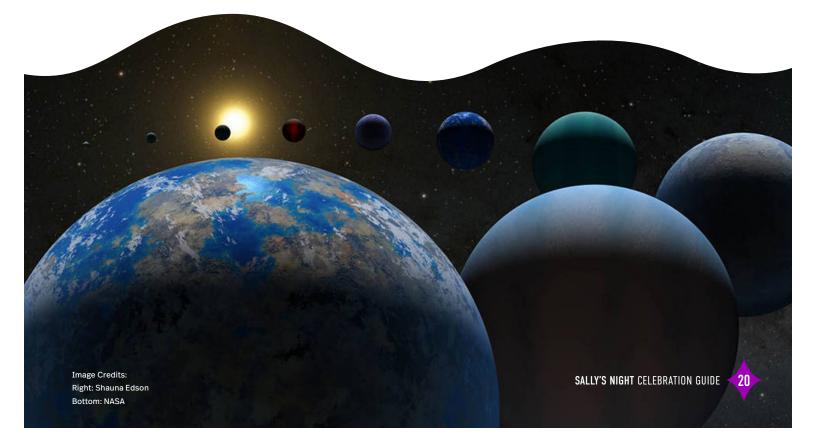
- A "star" that makes light, such as a lantern or lamp
- A "telescope" this can be a cardboard tube, a rolled-up piece of paper, a straw, or something else
- Family or friends to dance with

INSTRUCTIONS

Create your dance space and set up a "star"

Set your "star" in the middle of your dance space so there is room to move around it. If you are using a lamp, make sure to tape down the cord so you don't trip!





Dance your "planets" around your star

Each person will be a "planet" that dances around the star. Think about what movement you want to make as a planet. Here are questions to help you decide:

- Do you want to spin slowly, like Venus and Mercury, or spin fast, like Jupiter and Saturn?
- Do you want to make a small orbit around the star or a bigger orbit farther away?
- Do you want to show features of your planet, like mountains, clouds, or a moon?

Try combining these ideas to make your own unique exoplanet dance!

For some music, try the song "Dance of the Planets" by The Chromatics.

You can add on some more fun elements, such as:

- Giving yourself some colorful paper decorations or a costume to show how your planet looks.
- Moving around the "star" by doing a moonwalk backwards.
- Making your planet wobble and tilt.
- Changing your path when you pass close to another "planet" and get pulled by its gravity.
- Be creative, there are endless possibilities!

Add an astronomer with a "telescope"

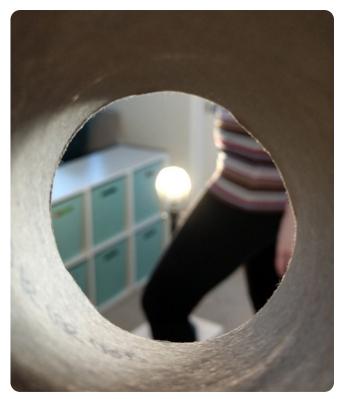
Astronomers use telescopes and other tools to search for evidence of exoplanets around stars. Grab your "telescope." Take turns having one person be the astronomer, who stands at the edge of the room and looks through the "telescope" at the "star."

Here are some things to look for as the astronomer:

- Is the star's light being blocked when a planet dances by?
- Do all the planets block the same amount of light?
- How long does it take each planet to orbit around the star once?

Looking for changes in star light this way is how thousands of real exoplanets have been discovered using the transit method!







DISCOVER MORE! STEM Resources for You

Celebrate With Us: National Air and Space Museum's

Sally's Night Landing Page airandspace.si.edu/sallysnight

Learn More: Sally Ride Science

Sally Ride Science's Landing Page sallyridescience.ucsd.edu

Annual Women in Leadership Event sallyridescience.ucsd.edu/women-in-leadership

University of California Television uctv.tv/search/?keyword=sally+ride+science

The Insider's Guide to the R/V Sally Ride uctv.tv/shows/The-Insiders-Guide-to-the-R-V-Sally-Ride-31442

Reach for the Stars with Sally Ride uctv.tv/shows/Reach-for-the-Stars-with-Sally-Ride-20848

Get Involved: Citizen Science Projects

SciStarter: Science We Can Do Together scistarter.org

NASA's Citizen Science science.nasa.gov/citizenscience

Seek by iNaturalist: Get Outside and Explore inaturalist.org/pages/seek_app_

Watch Them Make History: Women in STEM Videos

Sally Ride: An Inspiration for a Generation youtu.be/GtRqsMpfov8

Fly Girls: Women in Aerospace youtu.be/p12jUNsx5e0

Pioneering Women in Early Aviation youtu.be/jnF3Yt_uaoM

The Sky's the Limit: Women of the National Air and Space Museum youtu.be/w564-PGW7DA

Lockheed Martin Engineer, Danielle Richey, Reflects On Learning From \$1 Million Mistake youtu.be/oPwRqY2UVKg How This Scientist Went From Working at Target to Becoming One of NASA's Leading Engineers youtu.be/zQFxGV75aY4

It's About Communicating Science (Ginger Zee) youtu.be/groLjI8ItSQ

Exploring the World with Ariel Tweto youtu.be/VEnaZmIdKuM

Hidden Figures Mathematician (Christine Darden) youtu.be/-4jxZfOZToA

How This Scientist Went From Working at Target to a Leading NASA Engineer (Julie Kramer White) youtu.be/zQFxGV75aY4

Margot Lee Shetterly, Author of Hidden Figures youtu.be/zRghIrJUYTk

"We Don't Do Science Just for Ourselves" (Alexa Van Eaton) youtu.be/t4Hl_1yfBdw

"Take What You are Passionate About and Turn it Into a Career" (Celena Dopart) youtu.be/nArOJQI9EFI

Astronaut Anne McClain Asks Everyone to "Tell a Teacher 'Thank You'" youtu.be/WItSSOPHjAw

From Intern to Astrophysicist (Kelly Korreck) youtu.be/mgdg3HU7hso

Be Inspired: Role Models for All

Explore Our StoryMap of Women in STEM airandspace.si.edu/sallysnight

Learn about Other Women Scientists 500womenscientists.org

Connect with Women in STEM 1400degrees.org

Explore More: Sally Ride Reads

To Space And Back by Sally Ride

Sally Ride: A Photobiography of America's Pioneering Woman in Space by Tam O'Shaughnessy



CREDITS

The National Air and Space Museum would like to thank its partner organizations who received grants to hold Sally's Night events in their communities.

Air Zoo

American Museum of Science and Energy

Atomic Museum

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

California Science Center

Cerritos Library

Christa McAuliffe Center at Framingham State University

Cosmosphere, Inc.

Fort Worth Museum of Science and History

Kenosha Public Museum

MSU Museum

New Mexico Museum of Natural History & Science

Orange County Regional History Center

Pinhead Institute

Rhode Island Historical Society

San Diego Air and Space Museum

Schiele Museum of Natural History and Planetarium

Science Museum Oklahoma

Space Center Houston

The Museum of Flight University of Nebraska State

Museum – Morrill Hall

Special thank you to our Sally's Night interns:

Ariel Finkle, University of Rhode Island Emma Goulet, Saint Anselm College

Image Credit: NASA



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Smithsonian American Women's History Museum

SALLY'S NiGHT

How do you #ShineLikeSally?

Remember to visit airandspace.si.edu/sallysnight

