

More Students Join Space Center Houston’s Astronaut Training

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Category : Education/Family

Unlocking Word Meanings

Read the following words/expressions found in today’s article.

- 1. **cultivate** / ˈkʌl tə ˌvɜrt / (v) – to develop something
Example: The workshop aims to **cultivate** the participants’ dancing skills.
- 2. **gear up** / ɡɪər ʌp / (idiom) – to prepare for a task
Example: I need to **gear up** for the contest.
- 3. **adept** / ə ˈdeɪpt / (adj) – skilled at something
Example: She is **adept** at public speaking.
- 4. **aspiring** / ə ˈspɑɪər ɪŋ / (adj) – dreaming to become someone or something
Example: The **aspiring** singer attends voice lessons every day.
- 5. **firsthand** / ˈfɜrst-ˈhand / (adj) – based on an actual encounter or exposure
Example: I had **firsthand** experience of how to fix a computer during the training.

Article

Read the text below.

Around 2,000 students have already enrolled in this year’s astronaut training at Space Center Houston’s Space Center University.

The five-day training program was launched in 2000. It accepts students from different countries and is done multiple times a year. It aims to **cultivate** students’ knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and math to help them **gear up** for a future job at NASA.

The program originally catered to only 15- to 18-year-old students. But starting this year, 11- to 14-year-old students can enroll in the program. This expansion caused the number of this year’s enrollees to double.

All students who enroll in the program get the chance to conduct experiments, interact with astronauts, and learn about the center’s facilities. They will also study how to build rockets and habitats that can support life on Mars.

However, only the 15- to 18-year-old students will undergo an underwater astronaut training. This training involves a diving activity that will teach students how to breathe using only oxygen masks. The training can also help students become **adept** at putting pipes underwater—a task that simulates a zero-gravity setting.

Kaci Heins, Space Center Houston museum’s education manager, expressed her excitement for the program’s expansion. According to her, the program hopes to inspire **aspiring** explorers by giving them a **firsthand** experience of what real astronauts do.

Aside from the programs for ages 11 to 14 and 15 to 18, the Space Center University also offers an educator program. This three-day program is for teachers who want to pursue further space education and join a space exploration team.

Viewpoint Discussion

Enjoy a discussion with your tutor.

Discussion A

- Given the chance, would you be interested to join any of the Space Center University’s programs?

- Do you think that a comprehensive space education program should be included in schools’ curricula? Explain.

Discussion B

- Why do you think it is important for children to participate in career-related training?

- In your opinion, how can children be encouraged to participate in this type of training?