

Innovators unite and inspire

NASA's Space Apps Challenge is one giant leap for mankind

By Kerri B. McMullen
For Hometown News

CAPE CANAVERAL — Cape Canaveral's Sands Space History Center hosted a stellar weekend for aspiring scientists, programmers and dreamers alike, as it opens its doors for the 12th annual NASA International Space Apps Challenge Oct. 5 and 6. With participants from over 586 cities in 185 countries, this event will connect more than 60,000 minds globally, each driven to find innovative solutions for challenges on Earth and in space.

NASA's Space Apps Challenge encourages creative thinkers of all skill levels to form teams and collaborate on a series of space-themed problems over a 48-hour period. The local event, spearheaded by the World Innovation Network (WIN), transforms the Sands Space History Center into a vibrant think tank where attendees can draw inspiration from the center's rich collection of space artifacts and engage directly with industry experts.

Participants from Argentina, Colombia, and various cities across Florida gathered at the Sands Space History Museum this weekend to join forces and formed their team for the event.

"We are honored to welcome such a significant event at the Sands Space History Center," said Jamie Draper, Center director. "This is an unmatched opportunity to showcase the legacy of America's space program

and the contributions of our dedicated service members and civilians."

Returning participant, Julieth Loren of Orlando knew of the project from attending last year, "I met some amazing people with a lot of knowledge."

The team is collaborating on a unique app that begins with the story of Rupert the Space Armadillo and mascot of the Sands Space History Museum, a character who sets off on an interstellar journey from the museum.

The narrative follows Rupert as he navigates his way back home, traveling through different planets and constellations. Along the way, users can explore various celestial bodies and view the night sky from Rupert's perspective on each planet. Each step in Rupert's journey is tied to real astronomical data, blending an engaging story with educational content. This app offers users a chance to interactively learn about astronomy while following Rupert's quest to find where he truly belongs. You can use #follow-rupert to follow his journey.

Using the latest in AI and data from the Kepler and TESS missions, the app will offer an interactive way to view the universe from the perspective of planets light-years away. It's not just an astronomy lesson; it's a creative journey through space storytelling.

The NASA International Space Apps Challenge is a global hackathon-style event that has inspired innovation and creativity in the space community for over a decade.

With over 250,000 participants worldwide, it fosters collaboration among individuals from diverse backgrounds to tackle challenges related to space exploration and Earth science.

Leveraging NASA's vast open data, the challenge addresses critical areas such as climate change, disaster response and planetary science, while encouraging international teamwork.

Participant Jay Rosen from Gainesville shared that teams are using AI tools like GBT Engineer to automatically generate front-end designs and code files, allowing for limitless customization options.

The NASA International Space Apps Challenge, a flagship initiative of the Earth Sciences Division at NASA Headquarters, is a global hackathon-like event that has been inspiring innovation and creativity in the space community for over a decade.

For more information, please visit <https://win.ngo/spaceapps/>

The World Innovation Network (WIN) is the premier 501(c)(3) nonprofit NGO known for its SOLUTIONneering™ Framework, which focuses on not merely Connecting-The-Dots, but Connecting-The-Thoughts. WIN interconnects Cyber-Space, Neural-Space and Outer-Space to heighten education, enterprises and entrepreneurship.

For more information, please visit <https://win.ngo/>

As the curtains closed on a weekend



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A group of stuffed armadillos, representing Rupert the Space Armadillo, perched atop laptops as developers work on the app, which will guide Rupert through constellations and planets in search of his celestial home.

packed with creativity and collaboration at the Sands Space History Center, it's safe to say the NASA International Space Apps Challenge was an out-of-this-world experience. Participants of all ages and backgrounds, from Argentina to Orlando, worked tirelessly on innovative solutions while exploring new frontiers; both in space and in their imaginations.

With Rupert the Space Armadillo as a guide, they navigated planets, stars and constellations, proving once again that when science and storytelling meet, the sky's not the limit—it's just the beginning! #Follow-Rupert