

**Lewis Center for
Educational Research**

17500 Mana Road
Apple Valley, CA 92307
www.lewiscenter.org



Contact Information
Cheryl Thompson
Tel: (760) 946-5414 ext. 202
Fax: (760) 242-3783
Cell: (760) 553-5543
cthompson@lcer.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NASA'S LCROSS MISSION HAS IMPACT ON STUDENTS

By Cheryl Thompson, Lewis Center Staff

APPLE VALLEY, CA. October 28, 2009. Excitement was building at 4:00 a.m. on October 9, 2009 at the Lewis Center for Educational Research in Mission Control and overflow rooms, where 400+ sleepy yet excited students and adults were present to witness history being made as America returned to the Moon in search of water.

Surprisingly, the 4:31 a.m. PST time of impact did little to dampen the enthusiasm of those who braved the dark and cold morning. People had to be turned away at the Lewis Center gate as early as 2:30 a.m. and were asked to come back in an hour because there were no seats available yet since the 71 elementary students who had spent the night as part of the week long Moon Camp were not yet awake.

The lack of visual plume didn't disappoint those at the Lewis Center. In fact third grader Bailie said, "I realized that I want to be an astronomer when I grow up and am asking my mom for a telescope for Christmas." Ashley (third grader) told Kay Ardenski, facilitator of Moon Camp, "I want to be an astronaut and be the first girl to walk on the Moon!"

Looking into Lewis Center's Mission Control just before LCROSS impacts the Moon. Photo by Cheryl Thompson, Lewis Center



Debbie Gaidzik, Space Science teacher at Lewis Center's Academy for Academic Excellence (AAE) charter school stated, "As an educator it was the most amazing experience to be a part of with students. It was definitely a once in a lifetime teaching opportunity."

Along with thousands of students worldwide involved in Lewis Center's GAVRT (Goldstone Apple Valley Radio Telescope) program, Ms. Gaidzik's class has been involved with the LCROSS mission for months, monitoring the spacecraft as it orbited the Earth and Moon for a 4-month period before impacting the Cabeus crater on the Moon's South Pole. Many of Ms. Gaidzik's students wrote about their experience with the LCROSS mission. Tevin, a ninth grader

said, “The LCROSS mission was an opportunity in life that could not be passed up. It showed me that there are still great innovations and discoveries to be made.”

Chad, an eighth grader said, “When LCROSS crashed into the Moon, it made me realize how far we are going in space discoveries. Now I see that I can live on the Moon one day and serve NASA.”

The experience of LCROSS, and the fact that NASA included students as partners in America’s return to the Moon, has had beneficial consequences due to the participatory nature of the mission. This mission allowed the next generation of Americans to experience the exciting career field of science and mathematics. Or as AAE’s third grade student John said, “Now I want to be an astronaut when I grow up!”

For more information about the Lewis Center and how to participate in the GAVRT program, visit the web at www.lewiscenter.org/gavrt or call 760-946-5414 ext 287.

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