NASA/NEW HORIZONS PARTNERSHIP WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The NASA/New Horizons Technical Center Adopt-a-School Project has been named a first place winner in the National Partnership Awards competition sponsored by Partners America, publishers of the Partnerships in Education Journal. The NASA/New Horizons venture was honored in the Corporate Mentor category.

The awards program was open to schools and corporations involved in an elementary or secondary school partnership program during the 1987-88 school year.

The partnership provides New Horizons students with challenging state-of-the-art experiences through association with NASA scientists, engineers and technicians. These experiences span the educational spectrum, including both gifted science and vocational technical programs.

New Horizons serves students from six area school districts and fourteen high schools. Since implementation of the project in September 1985, approximately 86 vocational and science students have interacted in mentorships with 69 NASA engineers and technicians.

Dr. Patrick Konopnicki, New Horizons principal, regards the Adopt-a-School project as "an exemplary partnership truly worthy of national recognition. The program
offers experiential learning in a national laboratory setting unavailable in the traditional classroom. We have been expanding our directions each year. Both faculty and students are excited about the partnership opportunities that lie ahead."

Leonard Weinstein, group leader in the Turbulent Structures and Modeling Group at NASA Langley and project mentor, views the partnership as incredibly useful on both the corporate and the student side. Weinstein and Dennis Bushnell, head of the Viscous Flow Branch, were teamed with Jason Reed, now a student at the University of Southern California.

Weinstein calls the pairing "a perfect fit. Reed's work in the area of skin friction reduction in turbulent water flow has produced interesting results which look very promising in reducing hydrodynamic drag." Groups in and outside of NASA are interested in pursuing further experimentation for a variety of applications.

Langley project coordinator Shelley Canright, education and information specialist, also views the partnership as mutually beneficial. "Students are given the opportunity to contribute to and work on research projects for the future. Mentors are given the opportunity to contribute to and work with our future work force."

Don Soloway, aerospace technician in Langley's Automation Technology Branch, echoes Canright's sentiments. He regards his mentorship experience as highly beneficial to NASA as well as a learning experience for the student.

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The New Horizons partnership paired Soloway with a student who developed a mechanism to collect data from the very complex computers that operate robotic systems. Bryan Pelham, now a student at the University of Santa Clara, California, was such an exceptional worker, Soloway investigated and succeeded in making it possible for him to return for two additional summers to continue the project. "Pelham's innovations and subsequent upgrades have allowed me to collect data from complicated robotic systems to accomplish my job more efficiently," said Soloway. "He has been a definite asset to us."

The Adopt-a-School program is "an investment whereby all participants—students, mentors, school and NASA—stand to gain," says Canright. "The NASA/New Horizons mentorship has opened and will continue to open partnership opportunities of mutual benefit."

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