

**For Immediate Release**

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## **PRESS RELEASE – Melinda Thompson selected as 2021 NASA Solar System Ambassador**

Saint Charles, MO - Melinda Thompson was recently selected to be one of just 1150 NASA Solar System Ambassadors nationwide. This competitive program only accepts applications once per year, which are then vetted by NASA JPL staff for applicants with the right combination of presentation experience, motivation, and ideas for community engagement events. Ambassadors are given exclusive training on NASA missions, both manned and unmanned, from scientists and astronauts, before taking what they have learned and creating engaging events in their local communities.

# **Melinda Thompson**



<https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/ambassadors/2270/>

Melinda Thompson was born and raised in Ferguson, Missouri. After graduating from McCluer High School in 1990, Melinda enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. Promoted to LCPL at the completion of boot camp in Paris Island, South Carolina, she went on to complete the Marine Corps Air Traffic Control Communications Technician training program at the Naval Air

Station in Millington, Tennessee. After completing her tour at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, Melinda returned home and her career transitioned from electronics maintenance technician to computer services technician. Over the years, she gained experience with several local businesses, including Edison Brothers, Anheuser Busch and Ameren UE, before shifting her focus to providing services to small and medium businesses. Having developed a diverse technical skill set, as well as management experience, Melinda founded her own company, Working Technology. Although she had become well established in her career, Melinda decided to obtain her bachelor's degree from Lindenwood University. The requirement to have a Natural Sciences credit led her to take the Introductory Astronomy course offered there. Expecting this to be an easy course for the Summer term, Melinda was caught off guard by what happened next. The course turned out to be the most challenging course of her college career. She gained both personal insight and a renewed energy in her quest for knowledge. This ultimately resulted in her newfound obsession with exploring the vast expanses of space. Her desire to share with anyone willing to listen as she continues to learn herself, has become a very rewarding experience. Melinda is also a member of the Astronomical Society of Eastern Missouri based in Saint Charles County, Missouri.

The Solar System Ambassadors Program of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory offers information and excitement about real missions that explore our solar system. Volunteer ambassadors in communities throughout the country are selected by JPL based on their backgrounds and on their plans for public outreach activities. JPL provides ambassadors with educational materials and training. Further information about the Solar System Ambassadors Program is available at <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/ambassador>. JPL is a division of the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California.