

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)

Living In Space - Education And Outreach In Space Life Sciences and infrastructure development for capacity building (7.-A1.8)

Author: Ms. Beth Beck

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), United States, beth.beck@nasa.gov

FRAGILE OASIS: CONNECTING SPACE AND EARTH. LEARN. ACT. MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Abstract

NASA's Office of Space Operations and the Office of Education are partnering with Astronaut Ron Garan to create Fragile Oasis as an innovative incubator project to help connect the dots between what we do in space and how we live our lives on our fragile oasis, Earth.

The Fragile Oasis website uses the latest social media tools to engage users in conversations about space, while inspiring them to take action toward making our home planet a better place – one project at a time.

Fragile Oasis crewmembers can submit Earth-based community projects or school research to be voted on by the Fragile Oasis community in ten content categories that correlate with Space Station infrastructure and activities: water, energy, health, food, environment, community, research, communication, education and peace. Criteria for project submission is simple – a demonstrated desire to make a positive impact on the community, city, country or world. Projects can be large or small, student research or mature design, concept phase or on-the-ground development. Projects receiving the most activity (votes, comments, and shares) per category will be awarded a space photo taken by a participating Fragile Oasis astronaut. Special community-nominated awards may also be presented on-orbit.

We've also crafted a Fragile Oasis Education Plan for the Expedition 27/28 missions aligned with Fragile Oasis content categories. The Plan supplements the website and reinforce the Earth-Space connection. The plan details student challenges, projects, and contests, as well as sample blog topics for Ron, time permitting. This plan may become a prototype for future missions as we transition beyond the Space Shuttle program, based on the NASA Advisory Committee recommendations that NASA pay more attention to on-orbit education and outreach opportunities.

While this project started as Ron Garan's vision, we enthusiastically adopted this project as a new vehicle to share NASA's amazing stories, and ultimately point new users back to NASA.gov for more detailed information about space – just as Facebook directs traffic to the NASA website. In addition, we see Fragile Oasis as a flagship participatory exploration activity for the agency.