



## Space Camp Was a BLAST!

One of the most fun experiences I have had as 2012 RI Teacher of the Year has to be having had the chance this summer to attend Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama with the other state teachers of the year.

My mission at Space Camp lasted a week. What a trip this trip was! It was a literal and figurative BLAST! We worked long days, most of the time starting at 7:30 a.m. and going until at least 10 p.m., but the state ToYs had FUN and were happy to welcome national teachers of the year from Greece, Holland, Australia, the Netherlands, Singapore, Austria and China to our group.

I have never attended camp in my life, but here I am turning forty in March and heading to camp in Alabama of all places, and one themed on science and space to boot. Like all good camp experiences, I went in with the mindset that I would do everything I had the chance to do. It's not rocket science after all, oh wait, yes it is! We spent the week talking nerdy to one another and I got my fill of science and math enough to take me back to my physics major early college days.

I LOVED the simulators, leadership training exercises, and physical challenges of the camp. The pictures tell only part of the story. I did so many things that I never imagined I would do- which of course was in keeping with the spectacular events of this year. The laughs were numerous! The courses and keynotes were stellar. The missions were intense. Everyone, especially teachers, should do this camp once in their lives, really.

So, I have graduated NASA space camp and have earned my wings with honors for serving as flight director for team Kibo's lunar mission, which was deemed the best mission of the week. If nothing else, I have my Halloween costume for the next twenty years! BUT I am sure this experience will stay with me for some time. I am a confirmed space cadet now. It was a great week handling nuclear meltdowns, responding to failed ablative shielding, defying gravity, practicing rocketry, zip lining and flying orbital trainers. Nothing a teacher cannot handle!