



## Kaci Heins

Space Center University® Director  
Space Center Houston  
Manned Space Flight Education Foundation

**Kaci Heins** has a combined 15 years of experience in both formal and informal education. Currently, she oversees Space Center University®, overnight experiences, Stars & STEM, and Explorer Camps for the nonprofit science and space exploration learning center Space Center Houston, which she joined in 2016.

The center continues to develop new, immersive learning experiences to engage people of all ages in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). More than 250,000 educators and students from around the world go to the center annually.

Her academic experience includes teaching students grades 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> with a passion to inspire students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Heins has flown two student experiments on the Zero G plane through the Reduced Gravity Office at NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston and worked aboard the research ship in the National Oceanic And Atmospheric (NOAA) Teacher at Sea Program in Rainier, Alaska.

She has been awarded numerous grants benefiting her students and for three consecutive years raised funds totaling more than \$30,000 through the DonorsChoose.org STEM Lab, formally W. L. Gore STEM Grant, to send student experiments to the International Space Station through the Student Spaceflight Experiment Program. Other notable grants awarded include the National Weather Association Grant, the Captain Planet Foundation Grant, and the NASA Summer of Innovation in Robotics.

Heins' many awards include the 2020 Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award from the Astronauts Memorial Foundation, Space Foundation and NASA, Arizona Science Teachers Association Middle School Teacher of the Year (2015), American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics Educator Achievement Award (2015), Flagstaff STEM City Teacher of the Year (2014), Air Force Association National Aerospace Teacher of the Year Award (2014), and Air Force Association Arizona Teacher of the Year Award (2014).

She holds a Master of Arts in secondary education and a Bachelor of Science in elementary education from Southeast Missouri State University.

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**The Manned Space Flight Education Foundation** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit science and space exploration learning center with extensive educational programs. Space Center Houston is the cornerstone of its mission to inspire all generations through the wonders of space exploration. The center draws more than 1.25 million visitors annually, was named "Best Museum in Texas" by *USA Today* and generates a \$118.7 million annual economic impact in the greater Houston area. Space Center Houston is a Smithsonian Affiliate, the Official Visitor Center of NASA Johnson Space Center and a Certified Autism Center. More than 250,000 teachers and students from around the world visit the center annually to experience the educational space museum with more than 400 things to see and do. For more information, go to [www.spacecenter.org](http://www.spacecenter.org).