

OSU/NASA Education Projects: Aerospace Education Services Program (AESP) Archive

Oklahoma State University-Stillwater, Oklahoma

Joy of the Job by Rosemary Millham. Written 2001.

Joy of the Job

By Rosemary Millham

I attended the NSTA Conference in Boston in the spring of 1999 with the support of my school district. I attended every year for several years, and always attended the NASA workshops. I sat in two or three of NASA's in 1999 when a lady sitting next to me during a workshop asked if I had ever thought of doing something else with my teaching skills besides teaching in the classroom. I said that I had just mentioned that very same issue with my husband the week before, and had decided that I needed to think about a temporary change in venue. So, I told this nice lady that I had, but wasn't sure what at that point. She then told me about NASA's Education Programs AESP and suggested that I check into it. WOW, I thought. That is so cool! But, being the teacher I am, I worried about my students, the excellent Earth Science curriculum we had developed as an alternative to traditional education..yadda, yadda, and mused about the prospects that evening. The next day, who do I run in to again, but the same lady, Elaine Lewis, and with her was Doris Grigsby. Elaine introduced me to Doris whereupon Doris said she had heard all sorts of good things about me from Elaine, and wouldn't I be interested in sending a letter of intent to OSU? Well, apparently I did, although I agonized for weeks before doing so, as it is a major life change :), and after interviewing with both Goddard and Dryden, and in the midst of traveling Europe for three weeks, and international phone calls, deliberations and sit-down discussions with family, I took the job with Goddard. I must tell you, it is the most exciting, informative, positive life choice I have made in my professional career. I love my job. Plain and simple, complex and diversified, I love my job.

The second story has to do with the children we touch. For me, that isn't a common occurrence, for I spend a good deal of my time at meetings and systemic planning for education support. So, here I am at a school in Derby Line Vermont, conducting a student workshop on the solar system, and all of these super elementary kids are eating up the activity, when one of the little girls approaches me with a "gift". This gift is a little paper flower made up of various colored papers "glued" together to form the flower in an elaborate design. As she is handing me the flower, her teacher reminded the child in a quiet manner that she was not to use glue unless supervised by an adult, whereupon the child said, "I didn't use glue. I used spit! I wanted to make sure Mrs. NASA got this before she had to leave today." Needless to say, I took the flower, placed it in my planner, thanked the girl for her thoughtfulness, and chuckled. When I got home the next week, I put the flower in a box where I have another flower, glued the same way, given to me by a little girl in New York when I taught there years ago. This box also contains another "glued" flower, in blues and pinks and greens, from a mexican child in the barrios of Ciudad Victoria, Mexico from a 1988 Habitats for Humanity mission I lead for my church. It is a small world.