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**RNASA donates $29,466 to Aerospace Education Programs**

**BAY AREA HOUSTON, Texas (August 28, 2014)**  On August 21, 2014, the Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation announced a total donation of $29,466to various programs during their annual RNASA Volunteer Appreciation Dinner held at Cullen's Upscale Grille.

Rotary National Award for Space Achievement Foundation President Rodolfo González said, “The RNASA Foundation is very grateful to our generous corporate sponsors who accomplish so much in our nation’s space programs.  It is very fitting that the proceeds yielded from the 2014 Space Gala be invested in programs that inspire our future engineers and leaders”.

The RNASA Foundation hosts a gala awards celebration each year to honor individuals and teams for their accomplishments in aerospace. The RNASA Foundation presented its top award, the National Space Trophy, to the Honorable Charles F. Bolden, Jr., NASA Administrator, retired Major General United States Marine Corps (Ret.) and former NASA astronaut, [STS-61-C](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-61-C),[STS-31](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-31), [STS-45](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-45), and [STS-60](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/STS-60) on April 11, 2014, at the Houston Hyatt Regency.

RNASA has donated $10,000 of this year’s gala proceeds in honor of the winner of the 2014 National Space Trophy, Major General Charles F. Bolden Jr. USMC (Ret.).  General Bolden designated $5,000 to the Military Child Education Coalition and $5,000 to the Astronaut Scholarship Foundation.

González told the RNASA Foundation directors and guests that the total donation of $14,466 was made to the NASA Texas Aerospace Scholars program which consists of a $5,000 donation directly from the RNASA Foundation and a $9,466 donation for the sake of polo shirts for the participants of the 2014 summer program.  NASA Aerospace Scholars is implemented through a cooperative agreement between Texas A&M University/Oklahoma State University and the Johnson Space Center.

 RNASA also chose to donate to the 747 Carrier Project in the amount of $5,000. Space Center Houston is building an exciting new $12 million complex to celebrate Houston’s leading role in space exploration.  This new Texas landmark will be the first place in the world where visitors can see the full-scale Space Shuttle model and iconic Shuttle Carrier Aircraft (SCA-905) in classic piggyback configuration.

González introduced special guest, RNASA’s 2005 National Space Trophy winner, Glynn S. Lunney, who was a key figure in America's manned space program from [Project Mercury](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Mercury) through the coming of the [Space Shuttle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Shuttle).  Lunney was a [flight director](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flight_controller) during the [Gemini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Gemini) and [Apollo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Apollo) programs, and was on duty during historic events such as the [Apollo 11](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_11) [lunar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moon) ascent and the pivotal hours of the [Apollo 13](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apollo_13) crisis.

González and RNASA Foundation Treasurer Geoff Atwater made the presentation to Stacey Welch, Education Specialist from Texas A&M, who gratefully accepted the donation on behalf of the NASA Texas Aerospace Scholars Program.

Welch shared the impact of the program by quoting a student, “We were privileged to see the ISS mission control room and to hear from several NASA employees.  On Tuesday night, a previous flight director for NASA, Milt Heflin, spoke to us.  He told us many life lessons, and one in particular stood out to me.  He said that the trophies, the awards, and even the money eventually lose significance.  He said that the things that never lose significance, however, are your contributions.  I realized that I do not want an engineering job where I design something that will not help people, even if I get a large paycheck.  Because of this HAS experience, I was able to witness how engineers at NASA have changed the globe with their spinoff technologies.  This week showed me that I, too, can make a difference … I, too want to make an impact … and leave my footprint on the earth.”

The Texas Aerospace Scholars consists of Texas middle-school, high school programs and community college and internships; Women in STEM High School Aerospace Scholars (WISH), a nationwide program; and The National Community College Aerospace Scholars.

The RNASA Foundation’s 29th annual gala will be held at the Houston Hyatt Regency on April 24, 2015. For information on sponsorship opportunities and photos from previous events, please visit [www.rnasa.org](http://www.rnasa.org/).

*About the RNASA Foundation: The Rotary National Award for Space Achievement (RNASA) Foundation was founded by the Space Center Rotary Club of Houston, Texas, in 1985 to organize and coordinate an annual event to recognize outstanding achievements in space and create greater public awareness of the benefits of space exploration.  The National Space Trophy and other awards were presented this year at the RNASA Gala on April 11, 2014.  The 2015 National Space Trophy and other awards will be presented at a gala on April 24, 2015.  See*[*http://www.rnasa.org*](http://www.rnasa.org/)*for more information.*

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