

2020 Waterman-Twining Chapter TOY - Brainard Harris

Brainard Harris: Stewart Middle School; Grades 6-8
Exploring Aerospace Technology
Aerospace Technology 1

Brainard Harris Narrative for 2020 Chapter TOY

As a teacher my personal philosophy is that “students don’t care what you know, unless they know you care.” The more I go into my teaching career, the less I emphasize theory and the more I emphasize practicality. My bachelor degree is in music education, but I have taught aerospace education for the past 16 years. During that time my focus has always been, “what can “I” do to make a change in who my students become?” How can I help them reach their highest heights? In 2003 I was introduced to Civil Air Patrol and began teaching a class of Aerospace/CAP each day. During this time I have looked for opportunities that would give my students practical experiences in Aerospace and leadership. Now that I am at Stewart Middle Magnet School, I am now teaching Aerospace Technology 1 and working with the “John Glenn Top Gun Academy” students. Some of the things that my students have had the opportunity to participate in include:

- CAP Cadet orientation flights
- KC-135 flights
- Tours of MacDill AFB
- Tour of the NOAA and the Hurricane hunter aircraft (P3)
- CAP Encampments – Week long events on military bases that include Aerospace activities:
 - o Touring Jacksonville Naval Air Station
 - o Orientation flights, Simulator Flights
 - o Tour the AF–Redhorse Weather squadron, Tyndall AFB, and Fort Benning
- Annual Curry Camps – studying/learning the Introduction to Flight CAP Aerospace Module
- Annual Emergency Service and Urban Direction Finding training Bivouacs (for 9 years, over 100 cadets trained to find ELTs)
- Participate in Sun-N-Fun Fly-In including supporting the Warbird displays and AF precautionary mission to locate Overdue Aircraft and ELT’s (I have over 17 personal Finds and cadets have logged more.) I took 1st ever middle school cadets to assist with this mission.
- Annual Summer week-long Rocketry Camps
- Annual trips to Embry-Riddle University, Kennedy Space Center, Canaveral AFS, & Patrick AFB
- Build-A-Plane summer project – 2 schools – in cooperation with Tuskegee Airman Association
- Stewart Middle School - John Glenn Top Gun Academy Sponsor and bus driver.
- CASIS - (Center for the Advancement of Science in Space) – ISS ambassador
- Field trips to National Aviation Academy, TIA, MacDill AFB STEM day.
- Tampa Bay Area Spring Break STEM camp – Rocketry & Aerospace Teacher.



Left to right
Bill Yucuis, Chapter President
Brainard Harris, 2020 Chapter TOY
Baretta Wilson, Stewart Middle School Principal

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I know that throughout the years I have made mistakes – but they have been my greatest discoveries. I know that teaching means putting yourself in the midst of a journey. This journey that may not always yield the results you desire but teaches you to become a learner – just like your students. As an aerospace teacher, I hold my students to high levels of accountability. They give me many hours of their lives because they share a love and passion for aerospace and service like I do. Because of that, I feel that I have a responsibility to treat them as if they were my own. If they need someone to talk to, I listen. Many of the kids I teach need attention just as much as they need to know about the forces of flight. They come from broken homes and may have parents who are addicted to drugs. Others experience abusive homes and relationships, and the inability to have basic necessities I sometimes take for granted. I may not create the world's greatest lesson plans. I may not even be the best teacher in my own school, but I am someone that cares. The reward I get is seeing them come back each day to learn, share their experiences, and grow as a person. My personal teaching style changes every year, every month, and every day. As an effective teacher, you cannot be stagnant. I do believe that there must be discipline, respect, and a willingness from both teacher and student to learn. The classroom must be a place that everyone is comfortable. I love knowing on a day-to-day basis that I will be challenged. What I do not know, we learn together. What they do not know, I want them to learn. At the end of the day though I tell them this, "I am here to teach you about aerospace and leadership. Believe it or not, I guarantee you will learn more about life." I am certainly glad that both the teacher and student benefits from that philosophy.

I consider it my greatest honor and reward when my students who are adults come and tell me how they are doing. I am privileged to say I have students who are in every walk of life, many have gone into the military, or pursued aerospace careers as mechanic or pilots. I am honored that one of my former students contacted me recently to let me know that he graduated from West Point and went on to be a Rhodes Scholar. I also have had students contact me when they are having children, getting married or divorced, or have lost a family member. I teach students, my subject happens to be aerospace.