

RNASA donating \$32,700 to NASA Scholars

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Rotary National Award for Space Achievement Foundation Treasurer Geoff Atwater, left, and President Rodolfo Gonzalez present NASA Aerospace Scholars Program Manager Linda Smith with a \$32,700 donation for the Aerospace Scholars Program-- the proceeds from the 26th Annual Rotary Space Gala honoring Johnson Space Center Director Mike Coats in April.

The RNASA Foundation continued its 26th anniversary celebration by passing out \$25,000 in donations to the NASA Aerospace Scholars Program – supporting Texas students studying science, technology and engineering.

Rotary National Award for Space Achievement Foundation President Rodolfo Gonzalez made the presentation to NASA Aerospace Scholars Program Manager Linda Smith, noting that it represented the proceeds from the 26th Annual Rotary Space Gala honoring Johnson Space Center Director Mike Coats in April.

The \$25,000, he told RNASA Foundation directors and guests at a dinner at Cullen’s Upscale Grille, coupled with \$7,700 given the program for student T-shirts earlier this year, brings the total donation this year to \$32,700.

“By contributing to the Aerospace Scholars Program,” he explained, “we are funding the Texas Aerospace Scholars, which consists of Texas middle-school, high school program and community college and internships; Women in STEM High School Aerospace Scholars (WISH), a nationwide program; and The National Community College Aerospace Scholars.”

"With this generous RNASA donation, we are able to continue to positively impact the lives of young people here in the state of Texas as well as across the United States by offering NASA Aerospace Scholars," Smith said after the presentation.

To date over, 10,700 students and educators have participated in the projects, she added.

As the winner of the National Space Trophy, Mike Coats was allowed to designate the beneficiaries of \$10,000 of the gala proceeds and asked that \$5,000 go to the Texas High School Aerospace Scholars program and \$5,000 to WISH.

Previous recipients of RNASA Foundation gala proceeds include Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., the University of Houston-Clear Lake, Space Center Houston, the U.S. Air Force Academy Endowment, Parks College of Engineering at St. Louis University, the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., On Wings of Eagles Foundation of Bloomfield, Colo., and the National Flight Academy adjacent to the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla.

The RNASA Foundation was founded by the Space Center Rotary Club 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, Gonzalez said.

The nonprofit foundation presents the National Space Trophy and Stellar Awards honoring outstanding space scientists and engineers each year. Two previous National Space Trophy winners, Chris Kraft and Glynn Lunney, and their wives were guests at the dinner at Cullen's.