

"Space should suit me just fine. Thanks for making all my career dreams about our galaxy realistic ones."

— excerpt from *Advocacy Campaign letter*

SERVICE + ADVOCACY

[CASE STUDY #2]

Space Should Suit Me Just Fine

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Each year, GMSP undertakes an advocacy campaign that looks deeply at **girls, science and systems change**. In September 2006, after watching Heidemarie Stefanyshyn-Piper become only the seventh woman to walk in space (that's outside the spaceship, tethered to it), we got a little hot under the collar after reading Heidemarie's story in *USA Today*. See, Heidi's tall. She can fit in a male's "medium" sized space suit, which does not eliminate her from this very technical and highly dangerous work. However, if you need anything smaller than a "medium" space suit, you're out of luck. NASA not only doesn't

stock the small space suit, it declined to buy one specifically to be more accessible to women who want to find themselves walking out in space. Too expensive, NASA said. We talked with NASA and they confirmed that indeed they are not going to make an effort to purchase or create a smaller version of the spacewalk suit.

We quickly moved to action, writing and posting letters of petition from girls and from adults. These letters, downloaded 1,373 times from our website and given out to thousands at outreach events over a 12-month period, were sent directly to top

NASA official, Administrator Michael Griffin. Their reply came simply and quietly, as a form-letter thanking us for our interest in their program and telling us where the biographies of their astronauts (with so few women) were located. GMSP cares deeply about the messages that are sent to girls about their potential careers. We want our nation's top employer in science to embrace what women can contribute to the space program, but the message they are sending is that space is a man's frontier. ♀

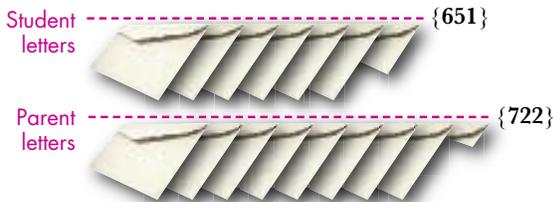
Heard: "Wow! What a wealth of information...

Great insight to girls and the sciences — the different ways to approach it and encourage them...it opened my eyes!"

Anonymous Science Teacher

Between October 2006 and December 2007, more than 1,700 letters were sent to NASA from BrainCake.org members, parents and students in support of the "Space Should Suit Me Just Fine" Campaign.

Email blast-off





Who is Kate Girdhar?

Profile: Kate Girdhar

Kate is a seventh grader at the Campus School at Carlow University who plays soccer and tennis, likes to read, and loves a mean pizza Margherita with pesto. She's an **active member of our Teen Team, and has been a vocal advocate for GMSP**, both to her peers and to adults. She introduced Mary Hines, the president of Carlow University, at GMSP's *The Girl Solution* toolkit launch with incredible presence and passion. When she's not earning her Level 2 Agent status as a Starling in Click!, Kate spends her summer vacation with another GMSP-sponsored science program at Carlow University, called Summer Science Nation. This past summer she had a chance to do an atom modeling activity, learn about polymers, and visit top scientific institutions in the region with girls far above her grade level. For the 2007–08 school year, Kate is participating in the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science, and has developed a research project called, "The Decrease of Vitamin C Over Time in Brands of Orange Juice," aimed at informing people which brand of orange juice retains the most Vitamin C. Deliciously scientific!

Profile



Spreading the word at outreach events and using html-formatted email letters, GMSP gathered support for its advocacy campaign.

