



NASA ASTRONAUT SPEAKS TO WATERBURY STUDENTS

By: Tikylah Spencer - Grade 4, Walsh School, Waterbury

My experience at the Palace Theater was fascinating. I thought it was fascinating because I thought the woman that was showing how astronauts live in the spaceship gave a lot of information. It was interesting to see that because I never knew how they ate and used the bathroom. It was cool to see them floating.

I also liked when students went up on stage and asked Rick Mastracchio questions about how it is in space and if he liked it. I would ask him on a scale from 1 to 10, how interesting is it to be up in space? I really liked that part of the field trip. I thought the field trip at the Palace Theater was awesome!

NASA ASTRONAUT RICK MASTRACCHIO'S VIDEO CONFERENCE

By: Adrian Fragoso - Grade 4, Walsh School, Waterbury

My experience at the Palace Theater and talking to Rick Mastracchio was amazing. The Palace Theater was beautiful. Talking to Rick was a whole thing I never knew. He knew so much information. His old teacher from his high school came and asked him how math helped him in space. He said it helped him in lots of ways like when something is wrong with the shuttle. This was my experience of the Palace Theater that I will never forget.

NASA ASTRONAUT RICK MASTRACCHIO

By: Anjavie Thompson - Grade 5, Children's Community School, Waterbury

On Monday, February 24, 2014, Children's Community School fourth and fifth graders took the PAL bus to Waterbury's Palace Theater to see NASA astronaut Rick Mastracchio. Astronaut Rick spoke to a packed house live from the International Space Station.

Astronaut Rick appeared on the big screen at the Palace and everyone began to cheer. Students from area schools asked him questions and he gave them answers.

The thing I thought was the most interesting was when Astronaut Rick said he could see the planet Venus rising up. I also liked when he told us about viewing the thunderstorms over the continent of Arica. I'm glad I was able to be a member of the audience to hear Rick Mastracchio talk to the students in Waterbury live from the International Space Station.

ASTRONAUT TRIBUTE: THE INSIDE LOOK ON HOW IT ALL CAME TOGETHER

By: Viola Flowers - Grade 5, Tinker School, Waterbury

On February 24, 2014, the Palace Theater of Waterbury, Connecticut held a tribute to Waterbury native, Rick Mastracchio, for his accomplishment of being chosen to be one of the astronauts to go to the International Space Station on Expedition 38. This mission was to repair the malfunctioning main cooling system. Teachers and students were invited to the Palace to celebrate his accomplishment. The program consisted of a live view of Earth from satellites, and most importantly, a chance to actually see and talk to astronaut Rick himself while he was at the station. Many people very much enjoyed it, but wondered, "*How did all of this happen?*" Well, here are the answers to some of those questions! I interviewed David Flowers, the Technical Director of the Palace Theater, to find out.

My first question, and probably a very common one, was "*How were we able to see and talk to Rick?*" David said that the video and audio were done two separate ways. "The video was with a program on the internet called Polycom. Rick looked into a camera that was connected to the same internet as the laptop, and the laptop transferred the image to the projector, that then projected it onto the screen for everyone in the audience to see. The audio, or sound, was done with a regular desk

phone. We called NASA from the phone, and they patched us through to Rick. The Palace also got an adapter that was able to plug in to the theater's sound system." It sounds like this process wasn't easy!

My second question was, "*How long did it take to put the tribute together?*" David said that it took about 3 months to get the program ready. "The first meeting with the city of Waterbury, NASA, and the Palace, took place on November 18, 2013. After that there were two tests to make sure that the video and audio worked. The first test was on February 3, and we made sure that the Waterbury Public School system's laptop worked with our internet for the video. We also tested the adapter by calling my cell phone to make sure the audio worked. The second test was on February 20, and there we tested the Waterbury Public School system's computer with our internet again, but this time NASA was part of the testing as well. NASA called the desk phone we were using to see if they could hear each other while using the adapter that connected to the sound system."

My last question was, "*In your opinion, how do you think the tribute turned out?*" David replied, "It turned out as a great, tremendous success. To think that we could connect with astronauts in space with 2,600 kids and a normal laptop is something that would've been in a science-fiction book when I was in fifth grade." And he is completely right! The tribute was amazing and I am sure that most of the other students agree. To be able to talk to Rick was unbelievable and his story was inspiring. I hope many people learn from this amazing experience. I know I did!