

ND science teacher inspired by Space Camp

By Grace Lyden

glyden@forumcomm.com

FARGO – Tonya Greywind is giddy when she talks about her week in Huntsville, Ala. Offering simulators, space shots and ziplines, Space Camp sounds like every kid’s dream.

Except Greywind is not a child.

The 36-year-old is a science teacher at the North Dakota Center for Distance Education, and she just returned from the U.S. Space & Rocket Center’s Space Academy for Educators.

“I’ve been drowning my children with stories,” she said. “I talked 90 miles an hour when I got home.”

For five days earlier this month, Greywind and about 50 other teachers donned spacesuits, manned control panels and trained on the same simulators that are used by astronauts. The program’s goal: inspire the people who inspire future

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TONYA GREYWIND,
North Dakota science teacher

rocket scientists.

“They go back to their classrooms and they’re just on fire with all these incredible things they got to do,” said Pat Ammons, a spokeswoman for the Rocket Center.

Greywind said that’s especially key in North Dakota, where few students participate in Space Camp programs.

Between 2012 and 2014, just 25 out of 75,000 Space Camp students were from North Dakota, Ammons

said. That’s 0.03 percent.

“I don’t know (why), it’s just not quite as popular up here,” Greywind said. “I think it could be, if people knew more about it. I think it could really blow up here.”

Greywind, for one, was not drawn to the stars as a child. But after a workshop with the North Dakota Space Grant Consortium, she applied for grants to attend the Space Exploration Educators Conference in Houston in February and then Space Camp.

Both, she said, were “eye-opening.”

At camp, Greywind went in a low-gravity chair, on a space shot (“like the ride at Valleyfair”) and down a zipline, which was part of a team-building exercise in which her 11-person team had to escape from a simulated crashing helicopter.

The program encouraged collaboration, and Greywind said many instructors talked about bringing that back to their students. It’s

different for her because her classroom is online, but she’s also thinking of ways to incorporate what she learned.

“I want to use all of the things that I got to try to build some sort of a module,” she said. “Even if it’s just a little taste of what NASA has to offer.”

Another thing she brought back to North Dakota: her spacesuit.

“On Monday when I go back to work, I’m definitely going to wear it,” she said last week with a laugh. Her co-workers have noticed her new affinity for all things celestial. “They keep saying, next thing I’ll be going to the moon.”

For now, she’s working on a grant to return to Houston next February – this time with her team members from the academy.

“We want to present a session on Space Camp for educators,” she said.

Readers can reach Forum reporter
Grace Lyden at (701) 241-5502



Special to The Forum

Tonya Greywind, a science teacher at the North Dakota Center for Distance Education, rides a zipline at the Space Academy for Educators earlier this month.

Greater F-M employment by industry

2004-14

	2004 jobs	2014 jobs	Change
Health care and social assistance	14,371	20,135	5,764
Construction	7,653	10,434	2,781
Accommodation and food services	10,035	12,417	2,382
Wholesale trade	7,181	9,478	2,297
Education and hospitals (state and local gov.)	8,992	11,126	2,134
Finance and insurance	6,640	8,459	1,819
Admin. support services	4,810	6,617	1,807

JOBS

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“This is a national issue,” he said.

One thing the study highlighted is a pay gap when median wages in Fargo-Moorhead are compared to national numbers.

the pace may be too slow to make an impact when people are deciding where they want to live and work. “This (pay gap) is a huge part of it,” he said.

Some other findings of the report:

► The number of jobs in the Fargo-Moorhead area grew by nearly 30,000 between 2004 and 2014, a 24

Stellman said, adding that organizing something along the lines of a communitywide winter carnival should be made a priority.

He said current efforts that promote the Fargo area as a hotbed of innovation and entrepreneurial drive should be supported and he