

## The Promise of Space Travel is Real

When Neil Armstrong took his first steps on the moon on July 20, 1969, every eye in America watched the blurry black and white television images as he stepped from the ladder of his lunar module onto the surface of the moon. With that "giant leap for mankind," thousands believed it would be possible for them to go to the moon in their lifetime. That dream is soon to become a reality, thanks to billionaire businessman and adventurer, Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic Space Flights. I – a busy mom, wife, and travel agency owner – will be one of the 110 Accredited Space Agents who will book the \$200,000 flights.

As a travel professional, I am fortunate to be able to follow my travel dreams – I have been around the world many times – and especially love the experiences that adventure travel offers. So when Virtuoso, the most elite travel organization in the country, contacted my agency looking for the best travel consultants to represent Branson's Space Flights, I knew this was an opportunity I must pursue. Space represents the ultimate travel adventure – the last available frontier. Despite the fact that I'd given birth just six weeks before the training began, I quickly embraced the chance to become an Accredited Space Agent (ASA) and also to someday tell my daughter that I was a pioneer in space tourism.

Following an extensive, intensive application and interview process, I embarked for the four-day training at Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., accompanied by my husband and our six-week-old baby girl snuggled safely in her baby carrier. What an experience! I never imagined that my travel career would require so much

### Travel



With Pamela Hurley-Moser

knowledge of rocket science. But, here I was learning about rocket science – and much more – in order to become qualified to send my travel clients into space.

Whatever the motivation, just imagine for a minute the adrenaline rush of becoming a Virgin Galactic's sub-orbital space traveler. You'll experience the full impact of pulling 3.5 G's as you travel faster than a speeding bullet at Mach 3.4 aboard the Space Ship 2 Craft. Then, stopping instantly, you will drift a hundred kilometers above the blue-rimmed earth with no sounds or noise, just the silence and stillness of space. Suddenly with a click of the release button on your chest strap, you will float up to the window for the most amazing view you will

ever see, the sight of Mother Earth. In an instant, you are filled with a great sense of awe that will stay with you forever. You are now one of the most privileged people on earth who have had the life-altering experience of seeing the thin blue line that represents our earth's atmosphere from space.

Beyond the thrill of a fabulous adventure, I believe that space travel offers a new point of view with the potential to change life on earth for the benefit of all. From our perspective in space, we can see earth as a home for all of us, not a set of nations defined by borders or a set of cultures defined by color and custom – we observe Mother Earth as a whole. And by seeing the fragility of that thin blue line of atmosphere and our means to survival, we cannot help but think differently about our earth. It is my hope that space travel will promote awareness of our precious environment and encourage opinion leaders with power to change the world to do everything to protect it.

Though only 12 people have walked on the moon since Neil Armstrong's historic footsteps four decades ago, because of Virgin Galactic's investment in space tourism, we can once again dream about floating in space and looking back at Earth! Though the challenges are huge, thanks to Virgin Galactic it is not completely inconceivable that humans will be vacationing on the Moon or even Mars within the next 25 years.

As space travel becomes an exciting reality for inquisitive and peaceful visitors from earth, I am thrilled to be one of 110 Accredited Space Agents in the world looking forward to helping travelers fulfill their dreams of going into space – the ultimate travel adventure.

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