

May 30, 2018

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Two ECISD teachers heading to space camp

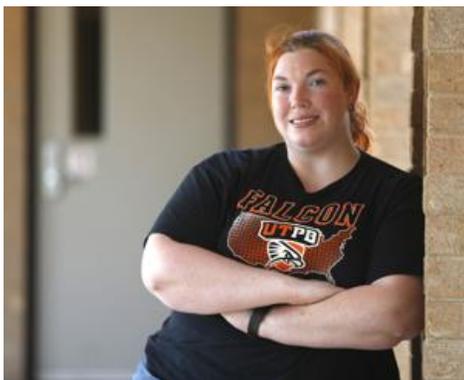
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Odessa American/Mark Rogers
Falcon Early College High School Algebra teacher Lydia Roundtree stands outside of her school Thursday, May 24, 2018. (Mark Rogers/Odessa American)



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Posted: Wednesday, May 30, 2018 1:16 pm
By Ruth Campbell rcampbell@oaoa.com



Posted on May 30, 2018
by Ruth Campbell

A math teacher from [Falcon Early College High School](#) is heading to the LiftOff Summer Institute at NASA's Johnson Space Center June 24 through June 29

in Houston.

Lydia Roundtree, a math teacher at Falcon, [will be joined by Amanda Webber](#), a fifth-grade science teacher at Hays STEAM Academy. STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, art and math.

Participating teachers will increase their knowledge of STEM through space education. Liftoff 2018's theme is Reach New Heights, Reveal the Unknown, Benefit all Humankind!, a news release stated.

The workshops will provide a chance to spend a week working with professional scientists and engineers at the cutting edge of space exploration.

Margaret Baguio, manager for education and outreach for the Texas Space Grant Consortium in Austin, said 62 teachers were chosen for the institute this year.

Each application is scored individually and on its own merit.

"We rarely have more than one teacher from the same district," Baguio said in an email.

Ector County Independent School District Chief Innovation Officer Jason Osborne said it is awesome that two district teachers are going to Houston.

Osborne said his department is trying to push vertical alignment between elementary and secondary education and this is a chance for that.

He added that it would be good to have Roundtree and Webber present at teacher university, a professional development event for teachers later this summer. That way, he said, maybe more teachers will apply.

Today's Edition



Roundtree, an algebra I and II teacher who just finished her first year at Falcon, and said she was super-excited to find out she was accepted.

"It's an amazing opportunity," Roundtree said.

She said she didn't tell many of her students because the last weeks of school were so hectic.

Falcon is also the school that is sending 13 students and four chaperones to the [National Center for Earth and Space Science Education](#) June 28 and June 29 at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

Falcon Principal Lindsey Lumpkin said tours of the Holocaust Museum, memorials and the Capitol are built in, along with a visit to the Marine Barracks, or 8th and I, to watch the U.S. Marines do a silent drill.

Funds are still being raised for the trip. If she hadn't been chosen for LiftOff, Roundtree said she probably would have gone to support the students at the NCESE conference.

"I think it will be really interesting once I've gone and learned what I've learned then I can come back and maybe share that with that group," Roundtree said. "I think they'll probably relate to it more so than maybe some of the other students. I think it's really great that it worked out that way."

Meanwhile, Roundtree is also excited about visiting NASA.

"NASA was always something that interested me as a child," she said.

Like Webber, she'll bring an extra suitcase.

"They want everyone to bring something that represents where they're from to share with all of the teachers that are going to be there. I haven't quite decided what I'm taking yet. I guess it's a way for everyone to relate to each other and there are some very specific things that represent this area," Roundtree said.

She added that the teachers will share lesson plans, so she's looking forward to learning things from some more experienced teachers that she can work into her classes.

Roundtree said she thinks it's great that there will be another ECISD teacher there, adding that Webber will pass on what she learns to younger students and she'll be able to tie it in to her older youngsters.

Roundtree said she was a little surprised she was chosen.

"I didn't know what they were looking for. They asked some pretty in-depth questions on their application about how you would use it in the classroom, how you would share it with colleagues. ... Of course, I just worried mine wasn't going to be as good as someone else's. I am happy that I was chosen and really excited. The timing lines up with when our students are going to be in D.C. Either way, I would have been involved in something NASA-related," she said.

An Odessa High School graduate, Roundtree took her basics at Odessa College and earned a bachelor's degree in math and a master's degree in geology from the University of Texas of the Permian Basin.

While she was getting her bachelor's degree, Roundtree minored in geology.

"That's why I went back for my master's because I love rocks, and really, it was focused more in paleontology. I always wanted to do something more in that field, or with a museum. But I had the opportunity to start doing the teaching certification," she said.

"I had a lot of friends that encouraged me to go into it. When I was in college, I worked part time at the math lab at Odessa College," Roundtree added.

She has enjoyed teaching at Falcon ECHS.

"I love it here. We have amazing students and all of the teachers on campus are fantastic. It's been a great opportunity here and I look forward to many years here," Roundtree said.

Lumpkin said the LiftOff Institute opportunity and others like it are great chances for teachers to grow.

"She is a math teacher here, but at heart she's also a science person. She just loves science and is excited to share that experience with the kids ...," Lumpkin said.

"She's done phenomenally well ... being here. We're kind of like a family, so we just kind of embrace everybody. From Day 1 to second semester, she has just blossomed and grown and done extremely well and is very well liked by her students," she added.



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