

CHILDREN OF MARS

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No one can be sure of the direction that history will take. Many events (including the fact that we are here today) point to the arrival of a new era of great voyages, incredible discoveries and exciting new possibilities. The sequencing of the Human Genome, the growing possibility of a human voyage to Mars, and great advances in our understanding of the Universe, all could be tripping points for incredible expansions of human progress, human experience and human endeavors

Many of the members of The Mars Society would like to be part of these great explorations that are, hopefully, soon to come. However, there is an enemy of these hopes. TIME! Many of us, myself included, may not live to see people on Mars in any great numbers. Maybe not at all! The time line for the human exploration of Mars is still very uncertain. History and its events can take huge leaps forward, backward or even stagnate.

The reason we are here is that we share a common dream of human expansion to Mars, and all that it entails. What can we do to help in addition to scientific research and political lobbying? What can we do to ensure an increased future atmosphere that is friendly to the idea of voyages to Mars? One answer could be what many of us have at home, or will have, our Children and Grandchildren!

We need to do what we can to help our children and grandchildren become “informed adults” - adults with a well-rounded sense of who they are, where they came from and where they can go. To help them experience many things, to be well read, to travel, to study many diverse subjects, to know where they come from (in both a family and a historical sense), to have an idea of where they want to go and how to get there. Informed adults may be more open to a future that holds great risk and great promise. Informed adults might not choose Mars for themselves but probably would be more likely to appreciate and support a Mars program. By helping our children we may also help to insure a future that we would like to see. A new generation needs our help and guidance.

I. EDUCATION

1. Get involved with your child’s education
 - a. Get involved in your child’s daily schooling, homework, projects and after school activities. What needs to be done, what is coming up, reviewing progress?
2. Public vs. Private
 - a. How are the schools in your area academically?

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- b. Can you afford private education?
- 3. Math and Science emphasis
 - a. These are two critical areas for any modern understanding of our world.
 - b. If you can do math you can do most other things. The reverse is not true.
- 4. Setting a standard at home of the importance of education
 - a. Ingrain the idea early that higher education is a norm not an option.
 - b. Expect a high level of achievement but not an impossible one.
 - c. A certain level of awareness of the world around them is expected.
- 5. Plan for Higher Education
 - a. As resources dictate, make a plan for paying for higher education.
 - b. Mutual fund plans
 - c. State tuition plans
 - d. Avoid depending on child's athletic ability to pay for higher education.
- 6. Provide an example of your own love of learning
 - a. Let your child see you reading challenging books, keeping up on current events, learning new skills and involving yourself in the arts.
 - b. Read the Great Books.
 - c. Every year pick out two or three new areas of inquiry to delve into Philosophy, Classic Literature, Foreign Films, Jazz, etc.
 - d. Learn to share your excitement at new knowledge and insights.

II. OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

- 1. Sports: Swimming, Soccer, Gymnastics, etc
 - a. Organized sports are a great way to learn teamwork, get a lot of exercise, and build self-esteem. However, beware of groups that make it too easy to excel.
- 2. Music: piano, etc.
 - a. Learning to play a musical instrument can be a lifelong hobby and recreation.
 - b. Start lessons as early as possible.
 - c. There is some evidence that links math ability and musical talent. Both are talents that would be useful on Mars.
- 3. The Arts: Theater, Music Concerts, and even Opera
 - a. Expose children to theater at a young age and make it a family tradition. Season tickets are not that expensive.
 - b. Many areas have Junior Theaters that produce plays appropriate for younger viewers.
 - c. Take kids to music concerts of Jazz, Blues, Classical, Pop, etc. Cities large enough to have symphonies may have classical concerts geared to educate and expose kids to classical music. Knoxville, Tennessee has three Mini Maestro concerts per year in which kids can go back stage, try out instruments and watch a concert that is fun but educational.

d. Older kids could be taken to one Opera a year, just so they can see what it is all about.

4. Skywatching

- a. Teach your child about the sky. Where are the constellations? Where are the planets? Where is the North Star? Where is Mars?
- b. Take them outside for special events such as comets, meteor showers, eclipses, etc.
- c. *Astronomy* magazine and *Sky and Telescope* have easy to use, monthly star charts, and list upcoming celestial events.

5. Chess and other Thinking Games

- a. Chess is one of the best thinking games available. There are a lot of good books available about teaching kids to play chess.
- b. Thinking games of all types are available. Younger kids especially seem to enjoy these.
- c. School Chess Clubs.

6. Space Camp

- a. Space Camps are available in Alabama, Florida and California.
- b. A great way to give kids an exposure to space exploration in a fun and educational environment.
- c. Parent-child camps are available as well as Aviation Challenge.
- d. One unfortunate drawback is expense.
- e. Too bad no one has developed a Mars Mission Space Camp.

III. DEVELOPING A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. Allowances

- a. Teaches about saving, spending and allocating resources.
- b. Money management skills can make or break you.
- d. How allowances are distributed, and amounts, are highly variable and may require some experimentation.

2. Chores

- a. As children grow older they should be responsible for some of the daily family maintenance. Job lists.
- b. Responsibilities should include all areas: Lawn work, dishwashing, vacuuming, etc. Someday they will have to take care of their own home. Vacuuming will be a big part of any Mars base.
- c. Both genders should be equally expected to help out, in all areas. Many boys are not raised to help out, so it should be no surprise when they do not help as adults.

3. Giving Them Your Wisdom

- a. Most of us are wiser than we believe. The principles of a smart and ethical life have not changed since ancient times. Tell them what you have learned about friendship, happiness, love, etc.
- b. Start telling them as early as possible.

4. Civics
 - a. Teach your children about your countries history, government and political leaders.
 - b. Talk to them about current political issues, who is involved, what are the different view points and which one you favor.
 - c. Take them with you when you vote.
 - d. Celebrate national holidays and know the reason why.

IV. TRAVEL

Travel is one of the most mind-expanding activities that a person can undertake. Your worldview is altered completely. Travelers know that few places are the same as home. The world, thankfully, is still a very diverse place. The travelers instinct to see what is over the next hill, the next city, the next country is the same as what drives many of us to see what is on the next planet (Mars).

1. Museums
 - a. Trips to local, regional and national museums.
 - b. See a variety of museums: Natural History, aviation, space, planetariums, art, etc.
2. Cities
 - a. Trips to major cities and cultural centers can be educational in a historical sense. Washington D.C., New York, etc.
 - b. Great museums are often found in larger cities.
 - c. Having visited a place that often makes news gives a sense of connectedness.
3. Colleges
 - a. Make your kids aware of the great colleges of the world: MIT, Oxford, Harvard, University of Chicago, etc.
 - b. If you are in the area, make a visit and buy a T-shirt.
4. Countries
 - a. As resources allow, visit as many foreign countries as possible.
 - b. Try not to let Europe be your only destination. India is not to be missed.
 - c. Foreign travel whets many people's appetite for greater adventure and stranger destinations. Maybe even Mars.

This is a very incomplete discussion of what can be done to raise an "informed adult". Most of this comes under the heading of good parenting. There are no easy answers to the hard work of parenting, and, what works with one child, will not with the other. Start at the youngest age possible. Teenagers may be invulnerable to any efforts, but try anyway. Our children are worth any effort and deserve no less.

We members of The Mars Society have a dream. That dream has to be passed to another generation at some point. Lets do what we can to raise a new generation that can see and appreciate "the dream" and take it on as their own. Mars calls not only for us!

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