



# Occupational Health Program

Monthly Newsletter February 2003



**The NASA Occupational Health Community expresses its deepest sympathy to the family members of the STS-107 Crew.** Seated in front (from left) are Rick D. Husband (mission commander) and William C. McCool (pilot). Standing are (from left) David M. Brown, Laurel B. Clark, Kalpana Chawla, Michael P. Anderson (mission specialists) and Ilan Ramon (payload specialist, Israeli Space Agency).

## ◆ OHP provides support to the Columbia Recovery Efforts

**Employee Assistance Program (EAP)** Our NASA community, the nation, and those who dream of the wonders of travel in space, were hit hard by the tragedy of the Columbia loss. For many veterans of NASA, the images over the Texas sky that Saturday morning evoked painful memories of the Challenger loss seventeen years ago. Within hours of the event the NASA Employee Assistance Program (EAP) network was available at their work site to support the NASA family. Each center mobilized a team of on site and back up counselors to be available to employees. NASA EAP teams were available at the Texas recovery locations to provide assistance to NASA and other federal agency employees helping in the recovery efforts. Counselors conducted briefings and held meetings for employees, and were and continue to be there to be a gentle support to the extended NASA family. Code AM played a role in troubleshooting and advocating the need for EAP coverage at the recovery sites and coordinated efforts with other Federal Agencies.

All NASA health personnel should know how to provide information and direct employees to EAP resources at your center. Some employees may seek information or support for the first time in their careers. NASA health care professionals should know how to direct employees to the immediate post-Columbia EAP and on-going EAP efforts to support the Agency during the weeks and months ahead. Information on the program and the phone numbers for EAP's are listed in our website <http://ohp.nasa.gov>. At some NASA centers, the EAP's traditionally cover federal employees, but during the post-Columbia period, our EAP's have been asked to see anyone who needs help at their center. All NASA employees can talk to a trained professional 24/7, either at their center or through the after hours EAP support number for NASA **1-877-887-7997**.

All NASA employees feel the loss of Columbia, and are working heroically on the recovery efforts. All health professionals should be on the lookout for increases in visits to the clinics- presenting generalized symptoms of malaise, difficulty in concentrating or anxiety, or signs of increased blood pressure and heart rate. This increased workload puts a lot of pressure and a great deal of stress upon our workforce. Letting employees know of the presence of a trained EAP who is part of the NASA team and understands our culture can go a long way in allowing employees to reach out to someone who knows what they are going through.

**Industrial Hygiene (IH)** Immediately after it was clear Columbia had not successfully returned to KSC, Industrial Hygiene personnel began to respond to the situation. The primary concern for Industrial Hygiene was protecting recovery personnel from the hazardous materials on the shuttle. At the agency level, and in the days following the tragedy, Code AM coordinated with many of the NASA Center IHs to provide critical information on hazardous materials and proper PPE in the recovery field. This information was developed into guidelines that were distributed through the H-CAT, headquarters command center, to state and local authorities involved in the search and recovery efforts.

NASA OHP Monthly is published every Month by the NASA OHP Support Office

Send information, comments or questions to:

◆ E-mail - [Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov](mailto:Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov) ◆ Telephone - 321-867-3473

Find OHP Monthly on the Internet at <http://ohp.nasa.gov/>



# Occupational Health Program

Monthly Newsletter February 2003

At the field level, and on the afternoon of Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, Gary Bergstrom, Sr. Industrial Hygienist at KSC, responded to Texas as a member of the Shuttle Rapid Response Team (RRT) from KSC. Gary was able to facilitate immediate communication to recovery personnel concerning the hazards of the Space Shuttle debris. Gary has spent over 3 weeks in the area supporting recovery efforts and is still there as the end of February approaches. On Tuesday, 2/4, Jim Taffer, another KSC IH, traveled to Barksdale AFB in Louisiana to aid in the debris sorting and debris transport issues from the main collection point, and spent over a week at the site aiding the effort. In addition to these 2 IH personnel, many other IH personnel from USA, NASA, and the IH contractor at KSC have been very involved with providing IH support during the transporting and handling of the shuttle debris. In the weeks following the accident many other NASA center IH personnel volunteered to assist the recovery efforts.

◆ **OSHA and NIOSH Training Centers:** Recently OSHA expanded the amount of **OSHA Institute Training Centers** from 12 to 20 centers in 35 locations. These training centers are excellent resources for professional training in the Occupational Health field. For a current list go to

[http://www.osha.gov/fso/ote/training/edcenters/edcenter\\_contact.html](http://www.osha.gov/fso/ote/training/edcenters/edcenter_contact.html). NIOSH also has 16 **Education and Research Centers** spread throughout the county that provide a wide range of Occupational Health Training. These are also excellent resources for professional training. For a current list go to <http://www.niosh-erc.org/ERCLocate/locator.htm>

◆ **NASA Health Promotion and Wellness Team 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Topic Change:** The topics of Asthma and Allergies have been moved to the 4th Quarter of FY 2003. The Agency's 3rd Quarter health topic will be dedicated to introducing and implementing The President's Challenge for an Active Lifestyle for a healthier U.S. The Program is in line with the objectives of Healthy People 2010. This program is unique because it welcomes community and family participation. For more information please refer to: [www.fitness.gov](http://www.fitness.gov).

◆ **Nursing News:** Did you know that...The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International and the American Red Cross collaborated to develop an online continuing education offering, "*Disaster Preparedness and Response for Nurses.*" Available at no cost to nurses, this offering is designed to provide nurses with an overview of their role in responding to a weapon of mass destruction/terrorism event or other disaster. Nurses completing this case study can receive 2 contact hours of continuing education credit. To take this course or others on disaster management, visit

[www.nursingsociety.org/education/ceonline.html](http://www.nursingsociety.org/education/ceonline.html)

◆ **Advanced Topics on Medical Defense:**

On March 5<sup>th</sup> the third session of the U.S. Army Medical Command sponsored services Advanced Topics on Medical Defense Against Biological and Chemical Agents: Vaccines Against Biological Warfare Agents will be air. The satellite broadcast will be taped. Taped copies of the program can be obtained from the NASA OHP Support Office. Contact Stephanie Odom at 321-867-9185 or at [Odomsm@kscems.ksc.nasa.gov](mailto:Odomsm@kscems.ksc.nasa.gov).

◆ **Preparing at home for a terrorism event** A good resource for information on "home preparedness for a terrorism event is [www.ready.gov/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/index.html). The site provides information on first aid, what to do in response to NBC attacks, how to maximize contact with family members, protect important documents, and things to avoid doing.

◆ **NASA Occupational Health Conference:** The 2003 Conference is scheduled for August 4th to 8th at the Loews Coronado Bay Resort, San Diego, CA. Information on the conference and on-line registration forms can be found at [OHP Conference Information page](#)

◆ **NASA Occupational Health Program Personnel Directory:** Please be sure to take a moment and verify that your personal contact information is correct in the Personnel Directory database located at [http://www.ohp.nasa.gov/prot\\_dir](http://www.ohp.nasa.gov/prot_dir). The directory provides an area for corrections to be requested. You will need a username and password to access this area, which is available from your COTR.

◆ **OHP NASA Center Evaluation Calendar:**

- JPL – April 1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>

NASA OHP Monthly is published every Month by the NASA OHP Support Office  
Send information, comments or questions to:

◆ E-mail - [Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov](mailto:Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov) ◆ Telephone - 321-867-3473

Find OHP Monthly on the Internet at <http://ohp.nasa.gov/>



# **Occupational Health Program**

Monthly Newsletter February 2003

- o JSC – April 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>

## ◆ **Upcoming Occupational Health ViTS:**

- o Health Prom. ViTS – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 3:30-4:30 EST
- o EH ViTS – March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-3:30 EST
- o HP ViTS – March 24<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-4:00 EST
- o EAP ViTS – April 7<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-4:00 EST
- o Fitness ViTS – April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-2:30 EST

These and additional calendar information are available on the [OHP Calendar](#).

NASA OHP Monthly is published every Month by the NASA OHP Support Office

Send information, comments or questions to:

◆ E-mail - [Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov](mailto:Bart.Geyer-1@ksc.nasa.gov) ◆ Telephone - 321-867-3473

Find OHP Monthly on the Internet at <http://ohp.nasa.gov/>