

# [PDF] A Smile As Big As The Moon: A Teacher, His Class, And Their Unforgettable Journey

Joe Layden, Mike Kersjes - pdf download free book

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**Books Details:**

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Author: Joe Layden, Mike Kersjes  
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**Description:**

**From Publishers Weekly** From a magazine article, educator Kersjes learned that students from all over the country could spend six days training and living like astronauts at Space Camp, a 450-acre

theme park, museum and educational center at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Alabama. Knowing his high school students would relish visiting the facility, he pitched the idea to a colleague; she questioned his sanity. He mentioned it to his principal, who responded, "You should be preparing these students... for life beyond this school, not chasing some crazy dream." Why would an administrator be bitterly opposed to such an enriching experience? Because these students had developmental disabilities like Down's and Tourette's syndromes, as well as emotional problems. Despite the opposition, Kersjes was determined to give his students the experience of a lifetime. With co-teacher Robynn McKinney and parent chaperones, Kersjes loaded 20 students, age 14 through 17, onto a plane from Grand Rapids, Mich., making them the first group of special education students to attend Space Camp. Kersjes recounts that most of these kids had never allowed their reach to exceed their grasp, yet there they stood, ready to take on an activity that would daunt many adults. The obstacles were plenty. From the NASA education program's initial unwillingness, to the \$50,000 needed for everyone to attend the camp, they met each challenge with enthusiasm and dignity, racking up some awards along the way. Kersjes's refreshing, heart-warming account proves that faith and vision can yield great things. Agent, Mickey Freiberg. (Feb.)Forecast: Jerry Bruckheimer (for Walt Disney Pictures) has purchased film rights to this uplifting story. Handselling by store clerks to junior high and high school teachers should boost sales.

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**From Library Journal** A high school special education teacher in Michigan, Kersjes faced enormous odds when he decided that he wanted his class to attend Space Camp in Huntsville, AL, a program aimed at providing simulated astronaut training for gifted students. His 20 students had a wide range of learning and emotional disabilities and were stigmatized by other students and teachers. Readers will be genuinely moved by the many funny, sad, irritating, and even frustrating scenes, as Kersjes relates the numerous bureaucratic and educational stumbling blocks he encountered trying to convince administrators at his school and at Space Camp that his students could benefit and succeed in the challenging program. Once those barriers were overcome, he faced huge problems raising money for travel and, more importantly, preparing his students for the rigors of five days of training. Their individual and group triumphs make for a feel-good tale that's highly recommended for academic and public libraries. Will Hepfer, SUNY at Buffalo Libs.

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