

More Than 1.1 Million Names Installed on NASA's Parker Solar Probe

Throughout its seven-year mission, NASA's Parker Solar Probe will swoop through the Sun's atmosphere 24 times, getting closer to our star than any spacecraft has gone before. The spacecraft will carry more than scientific instruments on this historic journey – it will also hold more than 1.1 million names submitted by the public to go to the Sun.

The public were invited to send their names to the Sun aboard humanity's first mission to “touch” a star starting in March 2018. A total of 1,137,202 names were submitted and confirmed over the seven-and-a-half-week period, and a memory card containing the names was installed on the spacecraft on May 18, 2018, three months before the scheduled launch on July 31 from Kennedy Space Center. The card was mounted on a plaque bearing a dedication to and quote from the mission's namesake, Eugene Parker, who first theorized the existence of the solar wind.

This memory card also carries photos of Parker and a copy of his groundbreaking 1958 scientific paper. Parker proposed a number of concepts about how stars — including our Sun — give off energy. He called this cascade of energy and particles the solar wind, the constant outflow of material from the Sun that we now know shapes everything from the habitability of worlds to our solar system's interaction with the rest of the galaxy.

For more information:

<https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2018/more-than-11-million-names-installed-on-nasa-s-parker-solar-probe>



The plaque containing names submitted to travel to the Sun is mounted below Parker Solar Probe's high-gain antenna (the round object with gray covering), which the spacecraft will use to transmit data back to Earth.