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# Second man on the moon makes his first landing at Aldrin School

BY DAN CULLOTON  
Daily Herald Staff Writer

It took Buzz Aldrin eight days to travel to the moon and back and make history in 1969.

It took him 25 years to make it to Aldrin Elementary School in Schaumburg.

Principal Leland Cook wrote Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon and one of the first to walk in space, and invited him to visit his namesake school shortly after Schaumburg Township Elementary District 54 opened the building in 1971.

That invitation, and several subsequent entreaties, went unfulfilled until Wednesday, when Aldrin, wearing a shooting star ring and lapel pin, and a dark blue-and-purple tie emblazoned with the solar system, stepped into the school for the first time.

With hands on his hips, shoulders back and chin jutting out, Aldrin introduced himself with a line stolen from an animated character he inspired.

"I'm Buzz Lightyear," Aldrin shouted. "I come in peace ... to infinity and beyond."

The gambit hooked the kindergarten through sixth-grade students who, until Wednesday, probably knew more about the character from the popular Toy Story movie than the real-life space pioneer in front of them.

During the rest of Aldrin's talk, the



**Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin was about 25 minutes late arriving at Aldrin Elementary School in Schaumburg on Wednesday, but Principal Leland Cook said it was worth it because he had been trying to get Aldrin to come to his school for 25 years.**

Daily Herald Photo/Gilbert Boucher

children strained and yelled to get his attention and one of the T-shirts and caps he gave away.

The visit held spellbound many of the school's baby-boomer teachers and parents who watched in rapt

attention when Aldrin blasted off and splashed down in the 1960s.

They counted their luck to be the only "astronaut school" in District 54 to actually meet its astronaut.

District 54's Neil Armstrong School in Hoffman Estates and Michael Collins School in Schaumburg were named for Aldrin's Apollo 11 crewmates.

"It's almost like the culmination of a 25-year dream," Cook said. "To us it's awesome, but for (the students) it's kind of passe because they see people fly into space all the time."

Aldrin School is one of two schools in the nation that bear the astronaut's moniker. The other Aldrin School is in Reston, Va.

Ostensibly, Aldrin's visit was part of the building's 25th anniversary celebration. But Aldrin, a national chairman of Mission HOME, was in Chicago to promote the new organization formed to rekindle interest in space exploration.

He also took the opportunity to plug a science-fiction book, "Encounter With Tiber," that he co-authored with John Barnes.

Aldrin wants his book and the new space society, which will conduct a Town Hall in Space at Chicago's Navy Pier on Saturday, to inspire people to look to space for educational, scientific and even commercial opportunities.

"Space is where your future is," Aldrin told students. "It will help you learn."



**Aldrin signed everything from pennants to newspaper clips to hats to paintings of himself when he visited his namesake school.**

Daily Herald Photo/Gilbert Boucher