

# Pass It On®...

## **Beyond the Moon with an Eye on Mars.**

*The story of a young woman who dreamed of pushing the boundaries and now designs launch systems for NASA.*

The billionaire space race is on. And it rivals the competition between Russia and the USA in the early '60s. In Trekkie language, space is "the final frontier." What has changed since those early days of Star Trek and Apollo missions is the hairstyles and the technology, but not the imagination of space dreamers everywhere.

Tiera Fletcher grew up in a suburb of Atlanta. At age 11, her list of dream future occupations skipped right past firefighter and dolphin trainer to scientist, inventor, architect, mathematician — anything in the field of science.

But you don't just jump from 11-year-old dreamer to NASA engineer in one giant leap. Tiera's mother is an accountant, and her father a construction worker. At an early age, they taught her how to add and subtract, calculate and measure things. She added up coupons and totaled receipts. She took an interest in architecture and how it related to building things. By the time she was 11, her focus was on aerospace, and she participated in a program for young science minds sponsored by Lockheed Martin.

Over the years, Tiera graduated from MIT, interned at Boeing and now works on the Space Launch System for NASA, aiming to put people on Mars. It takes a lot of drive to accomplish what Tiera has done. But it also takes the encouragement of good parents, a strong community and peers who have the same aspirations.

Encouragement is contagious. More than a pat on the back, the best kind of encouragement is specific to a task. It teaches, congratulates and acts as a pick-me-up when failure strikes. Imagine the type of world we would have if every parent encouraged their children the way Tiera's did; to learn something new, to get good at it, to keep trying. "My parents played a key role in cultivating my love of mathematics and science," Tiera says. "My favorite teacher taught me how to bring my dreams into an actual project, something that could truly change the world."

At 22 years old, she is the youngest engineer at NASA. Today, Tiera dedicates part of her life to encouraging young students to engage in the sciences. With all that she has accomplished, she still has a big heart for the big dreams of little learners.

**Encouragement...**[PassItOn.com](https://www.passiton.com)

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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