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# Libertyville High's Mark Buesing working with NASA in Greenland

## Libertyville High teacher goes to Greenland with NASA

By **Russell Lissau**

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Veteran Libertyville High School science teacher Mark Buesing didn't go to Florida, Mexico or anywhere remotely tropical for spring break.

Instead, Buesing packed some cold-weather gear and headed to glacier-filled Greenland, where he's part of a NASA mission to study ice in both of our planet's polar regions.

Dubbed Operation IceBridge, the program aims to collect data on the last remaining sea ice and continental ice sheets, which are in Antarctica and Greenland.

"Scientists can then use the data to build better models of global climate and better understand how the polar regions affect that global climate," Buesing said in an email to the Daily Herald.

Buesing primarily is serving as an educational liaison, someone who can translate the science for students back home and "inspire the next generation of scientists."

Teachers from Denmark and Greenland are participating, too.

He learned of the opportunity last year from Amy Westman, a 2003 Libertyville High graduate now working for the U.S. Antarctic program who met a teacher in Antarctica involved with PolarTREC, a group that pairs teachers and polar researchers around the globe.

He trained for the assignment in Fairbanks, Alaska, and met the rest of the NASA team there.

Much of Greenland is covered in ice, but Buesing was surprised by the colors of the glaciers.

"Brown, gray, blue and even hints of purple," said Buesing, who teaches physics and coaches the boys cross country and academic decathlon teams.

Buesing has used Internet-based video systems to connect with his students at Libertyville High and also with schools in other states.

Any teachers interested in connecting with Buesing can set up a time to chat with him and the team by sending an email to [e.schaller@nserc.und.edu](mailto:e.schaller@nserc.und.edu).

Additionally, Buesing is sharing his journals and photographs online at [polartrec.com/expeditions/airborne-survey-](http://polartrec.com/expeditions/airborne-survey-)

Libertyville-Vernon Hills Area High School District 128 spokeswoman Mary Todoric said district officials are “incredibly proud” of Buesing.

“It’s so exciting to read his journal postings and view his videos and photos,” Todoric said. “I can only imagine the incredible ways he will incorporate this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity into his classes.”

Operation IceBridge is a six-year mission, but Buesing will be in Greenland only until Thursday, April 18.

Married with two children, Buesing called his wife a saint for putting up with his extended absence.

“But keep in mind, I am only here for part of the deployment,” Buesing said. “Some of the NASA folks are gone from their families for two months at a time.”