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### **Planet 51 Star Brings NASA's Message of Exploration Down to Earth**

WASHINGTON -- Actor Dwayne Johnson, usually known for his action and comedic film roles, takes to the stars as an astronaut in a new animated feature that brings important messages about the importance of space exploration and education to those of us here on Earth.

Johnson provides the voice of space explorer Chuck Baker in the new Sony family film "Planet 51" and is featured in a series of new public service announcements dealing with education, diversity and NASA "spinoff" technologies. The public service announcements are available on NASA's YouTube site and the agency's Internet homepage.

In a public service announcement about diversity, Johnson underscores the importance of a global work force: "On this planet promoting diversity is very important. At NASA, astronauts from all nationalities and backgrounds work together aboard the International Space Station to help improve our lives here on Earth. I'm here to tell you that every barrier is meant to be broken, whether it's the sound barrier, the furthest layer of the Earth's atmosphere, the outer limits of our

solar system, or the challenges we face here at home."

"Films are such a powerful way to reach out to new audiences and excite them about space exploration," NASA Deputy Administrator Lori Garver said. "Dwayne will enlighten families about the importance of learning science and math and celebrating others' differences. He also informs the public about some NASA technologies which are used right here on Earth."

NASA Television also will air the public service announcements during its programming starting Friday and will make the PSAs available to local television and radio stations. The date coincides with the theatrical release of "Planet 51."

"Planet 51" is an animated adventure-comedy revolving around an American astronaut who lands on Planet 51 thinking he's the first person to explore this new world. To his surprise, Baker finds little green extraterrestrials inhabiting the planet who are happily living in a white picket fence-world reminiscent of a cheerfully innocent 1950s America.

The agency permitted the use of the NASA Insignia on Chuck's space suit in the family feature. Along with Johnson, the film also stars Jessica Biel, Justin Long, Gary Oldman, Seann William Scott, and John Cleese. It is directed by Jorge Blanco, co-directed by Javier Abad and Marcos Martinez, written by Joe Stillman, and produced by Ignacio Perez Dolset and Guy Collins.

To view the public service announcements on NASA's YouTube site, visit:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/nasatelevision>

For more information about NASA and agency programs, visit:

<http://www.nasa.gov>

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