Blue Origin Jeff Bezos Post-Flight Press Conference

Jeff Bezos, Mark Bezos, Wally Funk, and Oliver Daemen held a press conference after their Blue Origin flight to space on July 20, 2021.

Blue Origin's First Human Flight crew prior to astronaut load. Pictured from left to right: Oliver Daemen, Jeff Bezos, Mark Bezos, Wally Funk and CrewMember 7 Kevin Sprogg.

Wally Funk: We're all here.

Speaker 1: Please take your seats.

Ariane Cornell: Good morning, everybody. My name is Ariane Cornell, Director of Astronaut Sales here at Blue Origin. The first human flight crew of New Shepard. Another round of applause. And without further ado, I think it is time to pin these four wonderful people astronauts. And with that, I'd like to introduce to the stage

Jeff Ashby, our Senior Director of Safety and Mission Assurance, as well as former space shuttle commander.

Jeff Ashby: I am deeply honored today to represent all of the Blue Origin employees, especially the New Shepard team, past and present, and awarding wings to the first four Blue Origin astronauts. These astronauts will wear a set of wings in the shape of the letter A. The side pieces represent the road to space and our feather logo is the crossbar, and at the top a tiny blue sapphire to remind these folks that they are from planet Earth and that they have a mission to protect this home. With that said, Oliver, would you join me? They didn't make this easy. I practiced. Let me say something. Oliver, you have received a special gift of the astronauts' perspective. I know that you will do good things with it and make the world a better place. Congratulations.

Oliver Daemen: Thank you very much.

Jeff Ashby: Mark, would you join me please?

Mark Bezos: Gladly.

Jeff Ashby: It's so exciting for you guys.

Jeff Ashby: Any pain yet?

Mark Bezos: Not yet. Just pound it into me.

Jeff Ashby: Yeah.

Mark Bezos: I know you want to.

Jeff Ashby: I'm going to hand you this…

Mark Bezos: Thank you.

Jeff Ashby: Mark, I hope this experience will help you to continue to do the great

things you’re doing for humankind. Congratulations.

Mark Bezos: Thank you, Jeff.

Jeff Ashby: Jeff, would you join me please? This is so cool.

Jeff Bezos: I’m so happy. Thank you,

Jeff. Jeff Ashby: This is such a privilege

.Jeff Ashby: There are few people I know more deserving of this, Jeff. Seriously. And I don’t know what you’re going to do next, but I can’t wait to watch. Congratulations.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you.

Jeff Ashby: And Wally, would you join me please? All right. Sixty years, Wally. And I get to pin this on.

Wally Funk: Wow. It’s the best pin I’ve ever had in my life and I’ve had lots of them.

Jeff Ashby: Wally, you continue to inspire us. Thank you so much for doing that and God bless you. Congratulations.

Wally Funk: Thank you. More to come.

Jeff Ashby: Yes.

Wally Funk: It was great! Fabulous!

Jeff Ashby: The first four of millions to follow.

MC: Again, the newest international astronauts. The crew of New Shepard. Congratulations to all four of you.

MC: So without further ado, how was it? Wally Funk: Whew, it was great!

MC: Jeff, what was it like? Was it everything you imagined?

Jeff Bezos: I’m going to answer that question, but just real quick.

MC: Please.

Jeff Bezos: I want to thank a few people. First of all, all of the engineers at Blue Origin who have toiled hard to get this done. The people who built the vehicle, all of our manufacturing people. This is a big team. They've been working on it for many years and they have done an extraordinary job of building the most reliable, most beautiful, most fun, I mean I can vouch for that and I'll get to that in a second, vehicle. We owe them a deep gratitude. And the people who kept us safe today, who operated the vehicle, our trainers, everybody. It's just huge.

Jeff Bezos: I also want to thank the town of Van Horn. This is a small and amazing little town and we're making a dent in it, and we appreciate you for allowing us to be part of your town. And then, I also want to thank every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer because you guys paid for all this. So seriously, for every Amazon customer out there and every Amazon

employee, thank you from the bottom of my heart very much. It's very appreciated.

Jeff Bezos: And now onto how it felt. Oh my God! My expectations were high and they were dramatically exceeded. We were talking about this a little bit in the car ride on the way back and I don't know, the zero G piece may have been one of the biggest surprises because it felt so normal. It felt almost like we were, as humans, evolved to be in that environment, which I know is impossible, but it felt so serene and peaceful, and the floating. It's actually much nicer than being in full on gravity. It's a very pleasurable experience. Just from the sheer, just the way it feels, the tactfulness of it. The most profound piece of it for me was looking out at the Earth and looking at the Earth's atmosphere. Every astronaut, everybody who's been up into space, they say this. That it changes them and they look at it, and they're kind of amazed and awe struck by the Earth and its beauty, but also by its fragility. I can vouch for that.

Jeff Bezos: When I look out… You know, when we're sitting in this room or we're driving our cars and we're moving around the planet in our normal ways the atmosphere is so gigantic. We're these tiny little things and the planet, the atmosphere is so big. But when you get up above it, what you see is it's incredibly thin. It's this tiny little fragile thing and as we move about the planet we're damaging it. So, that's very profound. It's one thing to recognize that intellectually, it's another thing to actually see with your own eyes how fragile it really is. And that was amazing. Who wants to add?

MC: Oliver, you want to tell us how it was? Our first paying customer. You feel like you got your money's worth sir?

Oliver Daemen: For sure. For sure. No, it was so amazing to see it from above and to move around. Like yeah, I totally agree, it feels so natural. Almost like we should be doing this. We are one of the first and let's hope that many, many more people can do this because this experience you should share with more and more people. It's so amazing.

MC: And a special congratulation to you on becoming the youngest person to have ever flown in space.

Oliver Daemen: Thank you.

MC: You brought with you up there the next generation of space explorers, but certainly another flag up there, the Netherlands. To everybody out there, the Netherlands, there's the new Dutch flying man. There you go.

Jeff Bezos: Mark, you should say that thing you told me in the car about the G forces. I thought that was really interesting.

Mark Bezos: Well, I was surprised. I mean, they had told us what the G forces would feel like on the way up. Again, it's one of those things that you hear about and you anticipate, but you really feel them on the way up. It was incredibly exhilarating. And then on the way back down, what I had not anticipated. We hit five Gs briefly on the way back down and that's a lot of pressure.

Jeff Bezos: Status check.

Mark Bezos: Yeah, the status check for each astronaut. By the time they got to Astronaut Demo, which is the name I was flying under, we were at five Gs. And so, they were like, "Astronaut Demo, how you doing?" I was like, "I'm doing okay." I had a hard time responding, but… I'm not sure what that video footage will look like. Probably not very pretty, but it was so exciting.

Jeff Bezos: By the way, if you haven't figured it out yet, Wally might be the oldest person ever in space and Oliver the youngest person every in space, my brother is the funniest person ever in space for sure.

Jeff Bezos: I want to do a couple more things before we maybe go to next questions,

which is I want to recognize two people here in the audience. We are honored today to have Alan Shepard's daughters, Laura and Julie. Could you stand up just briefly, so we can say…

Jeff Bezos: And of course, Alan Shepard was an Apollo moon walker and has a gigantic list of accomplishments. But for our purposes today, the thing that is most interesting about Alan Shepard is that he is the namesake for this vehicle New Shepard. And that is because the mission profile that we did today is very similar to the one that Alan flew when he became the first American in space, I guess 60-ish years ago. So, we are very honored to have you guys here. Thank you for joining us. It's incredible. I got some pictures with them backstage and those are getting blown up big. Thank you. Jeff Bezos: And then I have a couple things to show. Do you want to talk about the couple things we flew? Like the… Go ahead.

Mark Bezos: So, we had the opportunity to bring with us, it was actually on loan from The Explorers Club, we were able to fly with a piece of canvas from the Wright flyer. So the plane that the Wright brothers flew, we brought a piece of that canvas with us, which was really powerful. As well as a bronze medallion that was made from the first hot air balloon flight in 1783, which was the first time man every left the Earth in controlled flight. So, we were very thrilled to be able to bring both of those along with us.

Jeff Bezos: And we brought those precious objects back.

Mark Bezos: Yes, we did. And The Explorers Club will be pleased to hear that.

Jeff Bezos: Yes. They're very happy about that. And we have one more thing, which I would actually just like to show you, if you could… Who has the goggles? Could you please bring them up to me?

Jeff Bezos: Yeah, would you hold that for me? Wally Funk: This is incredible.

Jeff Bezos: All right. Why don't you stand so I can face it to… This also flew… These are Amelia Earhart's goggles. The ones she flew across the Atlantic with, solo. And you can see she put tape over them to kind of have less light come in because it was just so bright all of the day and she was flying for so long. And they're just… I like to think that if Amelia were here she would be very, very proud of Wally. Jeff Bezos: And I just can't… I can't resist doing this. So, thank you Amelia wherever you are. We hope you're watching all of this. Thank you. I'll give these back to you.

These are precious. Precious cargo. There you go. MC: And well, on that note, Wally-

Jeff Bezos: Oh, I’m sorry.

MC: Oh, please go ahead.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you. Lauren just reminded me, I have one more thing, which is… Christina, I might need your help on this. Mom, could you come up for a second? Where’s my mom? Okay, you don’t have to come up. I can come to you. I have… I wore this necklace and it is a Blue Origin feather, and I wore it up into space and now it’s for you.

Jeff Bezos: I would put it on her myself, but I would need my reading glasses.

Jeff Bezos: Okay.

MC: And now, Wally. Last, but not least. Amelia Earhart, what a lovely transition. An aviation icon and now an aerospace, a space icon. What was it like? Wally Funk: Whew! I can’t tell you! I had such a good instructor. He took us through everything that we were going to do, so when I went up this morning the noise wasn’t quite as bad and we went right on up, and I saw darkness. I thought I was going to see the world, but we weren’t quite high enough and I felt great. I felt like I was just laying down and I was going into space. And I want to thank you sweetheart because you made it possible for me. I’ve been waiting a long time to finally get up there. I’ve done a lot of astronaut training through the world, Russia, America, and I could always beat the guys on what they were doing because I was always stronger. And I’ve always done everything on my own. And, I didn’t do dolls. I did outside stuff. And I flew airplanes. I have 19,000 some hours. I loved it and I love being here with all of you and your family, and the four of us. We had a great time. It was wonderful.

Jeff Bezos: That’s true.

Wally Funk: I want to go again, fast! And then, when I got off the ship they gave me the tail end of one of the balloons, and I’m going to cherish that forever.

Jeff Bezos: And by the way, we can confirm that Wally once again in training out performed the men on the mission, 100 percent.

MC: I was going to say, she beat the three boys up to the top of the crew access

area. Everybody saw that. Three boys up to the top of the crew access. Everybody saw that. There’s video footage.

Jeff Bezos: We have proof.

MC: Indeed, darling, you did. You did. Well, so, Wally Funk, now the world’s oldest astronauts who have ever gone to space and perhaps the first founding member of our Blue Origin frequent flyer program.

Wally Funk: Surprise to me.

MC: It sounds like she’s ready for it.

Wally Funk: When I do lectures or wherever I am around the world and the United States, I’m only 45. MC: You’re being generous. I keep saying every time somebody says, “Oh, she’s 82,” I think there’s a typo. You’re 28, Wally. We know this. Well, no. Well, thank you so much for giving us your impressions, but let’s see it with our own eyes. Oliver : Okay.

Jeff Bezos: Oh, wow.

Mark Bezos: Oh, wow.

Oliver : Oh, wow. That’s incredible.

Mark Bezos: … to space.

Wally Funk: Oh!

Astronauts Oliver Daemen, Wally Funk, and Mark Bezos inside the New Shepard crew capsule at apogee.

Jeff Bezos: Is it everything you thought it would be?

Wally Funk: Fantastic.

Jeff Bezos: Here, look. Oliver.

Mark Bezos: Move your head just a little.

Wally Funk: Oh, that’s great.

Mark Bezos: Can you move your head a little, Wally, for us?

Wally Funk: Oh, yeah. Hi, Mom! I love it.

Jeff Bezos: Oh, wow, wow, wow.

Wally Funk: Look at the blackness of space and below.

Mark Bezos: Here, catch.

Oliver : Oh, yeah. Give me the ball.

Mark Bezos: Ready?

Wally Funk: Woo-hoo!

Mark Bezos: Here it comes. You just have to wait for it. Who wants a Skittle?

Oliver : Oh, yeah, yeah. Throw one.

Mark Bezos: All right. See if you can catch this in your mouth. Yeah, I love that. Well done. Here, toss me one. Good job. Here it goes. That was a mid foul.

Jeff Bezos: Here, try again.

Wally Funk: I can’t get it up. Oliver : I got you, I got you.

Mark Bezos: Oh, wow. Awesome. So good. Oh, wow.

Jeff Bezos: Oh, my God.

Mark Bezos: It’s absolutely.

Jeff Bezos: This is incredible.

Wally Funk: Oh, I love it. I love it.

Mark Bezos: Oh, wow, wow, wow.

Wally Funk: Man, this is different, isn’t it?

Jeff Bezos: It’s a little different.

Wally Funk: I could not

Jeff Bezos: Oh, wow. So let’s take a moment to look outside.

Wally Funk: Thank you, sweetheart. You were wonderful.

Jeff Bezos: Woo!

Mark Bezos: That was a good catch.

MC: Wally … Oh, sorry. Go ahead, Mark.

Mark Bezos: I was going to say that was a good catch.

MC: Wally, was it everything you expected and more? You’ve been waiting, as you said, 60 years to experience this.

Wally Funk: I loved every minute of it. I just wish it had been longer because I had been in space before, not in space, but up in that area and could do a lot more rolls and twists and so forth. But there was not quite enough room for all four of us to do all those things. It was great. I loved it. I can hardly wait to go again.

Jeff Bezos: Amen. Next next stop for you is the moon, Wally.

Wally Funk: Yes, sir. MC: Any other impressions, now having seen the video of it? Is it one of those things where you just took it in and it's hard to compare to video? What are other sensations that come from having seen that right now? All of you.

Oliver : Felt way cooler than it looked.

MC: Well, so after, of course, their four minutes of weightlessness, the fun that you had, of course, we got you buckled back in and you descended under those beautiful three parachutes. I think we've got another video here of your descent back to our beautiful West Texas Valley. Why don't we roll that right now?

Mark Bezos: That moment felt pretty good. I'm not going to lie.

Jeff Bezos: That's true. When you see the three main shoots out, that's relaxing.
Wally Funk: That was so easy. It was just incredible.

MC: Whoa.

Wally Funk: I didn't feel that.

Jeff Bezos: Well, that's because it's dust kicked up by a cushion of air that makes you only hit at about one mile an hour. It feels like if you were to stand up, you're just going to plop. Woo!.

Oliver : Oh, it was so cool. Wally Funk: Oh, my God. It was so great.

MC: What

Jeff Bezos: Our family was happy to see us. That's a good sign.

MC: What was that moment like coming back and seeing your friends and your family here? You have supported them … or they have supported you, that is, your dreams to get to this point. Oliver, your father's here. Joseph, thank you so much for

being here. What was that like?

Oliver : It was a bit more emotional than I would have thought. Everyone on the ground was way more emotional than we were. We were just having fun.

Mark Bezos: That is so true. Yeah. Yeah, I think that our family has been extremely supportive through all of this. I think that … I know that my wife was an absolute rock leading up to this, which made the adventure much easier for me. But I know that when we came down, it was time to let those emotions out a little bit. So it was great to see everybody and yeah, it was a little more emotional than I had anticipated as well.

MC: Jeff?

Jeff Bezos: Yeah. I wasn't that nervous, but my family was somewhat anxious about this. It was so sweet actually to get hugged by them after landing, especially my kids and Lauren and my mom and dad, and really all of you guys. We have a bunch of close here, too, and it just makes me realize how much I love you and how much I'm loved.

MC: Wally, your friend Mary is here.

Wally Funk: Yes, I am so happy she's here. She knows what I'm going through. She has been … She was one of my flight students and I've had many, many, over 3000 flight students. I don't know if they're going to get to see this or not, but I felt so charged. I was not nervous. I was just normal, normal person going up into space. That's what I wanted to feel. Nothing here.

Jeff Bezos: I can confirm that Wally was never nervous. Mark Bezos: She was wondering what was taking so long. Jeff Bezos: It's true. We had a six minute hold on the pad. Wally was like, "Are we going to go or not? What the hell? We're burning daylight. Let's go." MC: But then, Wally, once we got you going, we got you going fast, going over Mach 3. It's this beautiful rocket behind us here, our New Shepard rocket that got the team up to space. By the way, it also of course, made its landing back on the landing pad. Why don't we take a look at that landing that we have here? Mark Bezos: Woo! That was a bullseye.

MC: Absolutely bulls-eye. Jeff, a beautiful piece of engineering that our team here at Blue Origin has developed. Would you like to talk to us a little bit about why we

chose vertical takeoff, vertical landing, being powered by this BE3 engine? because today is not the end, right? We're going further with this technology. Jeff Bezos: No, that's a helpful question because the fact of the matter is that the architecture and the technology we have chosen is complete overkill for a suborbital tourism mission. We have chosen the vertical landing architecture. Why do we do that? Because it scales. It's an architecture that can grow to a very large size. So we want to have experience with architectures that can grow big to New Glenn and one day to New Armstrong. So to have the idea that you want to build big from the beginning, lets you choose an architecture, because the whole point of doing this is to get practice.

Jeff Bezos: Other kinds of architectures don't scale in the same way to very large size. Vertical landing does. In fact, you can think about it very easily because if you try to … When you are landing a rocket vertically, you are solving, what's called the inverted pendulum problem and you are balancing a broomstick on the tip of your finger. You can balance a broomstick on the tip of your finger. You know what you can not balance on the tip of your finger? A pencil.

Jeff Bezos: So basically the smaller the object, the harder it is to balance. As the object gets bigger and bigger and bigger, it gets easier and easier and easier to balance. It's a very simple because this has more momentum. So it's easier to get under it. So that architecture scales. That's why we chose it.

Jeff Bezos: Then the second thing that is a very puzzling architecture choice for most people who know a lot about rockets, you would never choose liquid hydrogen for a suborbital tourism mission. It's completely unnecessary. It's the most powerful, highestperforming rocket fuel in the world. There are two reasons we chose it. The first is again, practice. We shows that propellant because what you see behind me is basically the second stage of New Glenn.

Jeff Bezos: So every time we fly this tourism mission, we're practicing flying the second stage of New Glenn. That's where you really do want hydrogen, on the second stage of a vehicle that is designed not only to go into low earth orbit, but to bodies outside of low earth orbit.

Jeff Bezos: Then the other reason we chose it is because it is the most environmentally benign propellant you can choose. When you burn hydrogen and oxygen, you get H2O. H2O is water. So that is another thing. For a tourism mission, that was really important to us as well. So that's why we chose this architecture you

see behind me and the engineering team did an incredible job. They also really built two vehicles. What you see is not really a vehicle because I can assure you, the escape system was at least as complicated, hard to design and to test and demonstrate as the main booster itself. So it's almost like building a whole separate vehicle. I'm also extremely happy we didn't test it today.

MC: Thank you so much. Again, congratulations to you all. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Linda Mills, Head of Communications here at Blue Origin to start the press conference. Thank you very much.

Jeff Bezos: Woo! Linda Mills: Let's give another round of applause to our amazing newly-minted astronauts. All right. I would like to give a thank you to our journalists who showed up at 2:30 this morning to get set up.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you.

Linda Mills: I know it's been a long day for all of you, so thank you.

Jeff Bezos: I can't believe you guys are still smiling. Thank you.

Mark Bezos: Thank you.

Linda Mills: So we'll be able to take a few questions and then we'll just pose for a few photos. So, Rachel, why don't you start? Rachel with CNN.

Rachel: Yeah, Rachel Crane with CNN. Congratulations, you guys, on your astronaut wings.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you, Rachel.

Rachel: Jeff, you have said in the past that the work you're doing with Blue Origin is the most important of your career. You've recently stepped down as CEO of Amazon. Can we expect for you to be more hands-on with Blue Origin? Is this going to be your new focus?

Jeff Bezos: Yes. So I'm going to split my time between Blue Origin and the Bezos Earth Fund. So the Bezos Earth Fund is about climate change and sustainability. That is those two things. There's going to be a third thing and maybe a fourth thing, but I don't know what those are yet. I'm not very good at doing one thing.

Rachel: Are you going to be flying again soon? Jeff Bezos: Hell, yes. How fast can you refuel that thing? Let’s go.

Linda Mills: All right, next question. Linda Mills: About the cadence and the capabilities.

Jeff Bezos: Okay. We’re going to fly the human missions twice more this year, and what we do in the following year, I’m not sure yet. We’ll figure that out and what the cadence will eventually be. We want the cadence to be very high. One thing we’ve found out through the auction process and what we’ve been doing is private sales. We’re approaching a hundred million dollars in private sales already, and the demand is very, very high. So we’re going to keep after that because we really do want to practice with this vehicle. So we’re going to have to build more boosters to fly more frequently. We’re going to be doing that and working on all the operational things we need to do, all the things we learned.

Jeff Bezos: What practice does is lets you get better. We want to be able … Right now we have a mission life, we think, somewhere between 25 and 100 flights for one of these vehicles. We’d like to make that closer to 100 than to 25. Then once it’s close to 100, we will push it past 100. That’s how you get operational usability. You have to remember, big things start small. I told this crew when we got in today and we were sitting there on the pad waiting to lift off. We had time to ourselves and I just said, “Guys, if you’re willing, if you let me invite you, when we get up there, there’s going to be all kinds of adrenaline, all kinds of excitement and novelty, but take a minute, take a few seconds to look out and calmly think about what we’re doing is not only adventure. It is adventure and it is fun, but it’s also important because what we’re doing is the first step of something big.”

Jeff Bezos: I know what that feels like. I did it three decades ago, almost three decades ago, with Amazon. Big things start small. But you can tell, you can tell when you’re onto something and this is important. We’re going to build a road to space so that our kids and their kids can build the future. We need to do that. We need to do that to solve the problems here on earth. This is not about escaping Earth. Every time I read an article about people wanting to escape Earth, no, no, no, no, no. The whole point is this is the only good planet in this solar system.

Jeff Bezos: We’ve sent robotic probes to all of them. This is the only good one. I promise you and we have to take care of it. If you go into space and see how fragile

it is, you'll want to take care of it even more. That's what this is about. We have to take, and this is going to take decades. This is a big vision, but big things start small and this is how it starts. We are going to build an infrastructure.

Jeff Bezos: Just like when I started Amazon, I didn't have to build the Postal Service or Royal Mail or Deutsche Post. There were already gigantic worldwide infrastructure to deliver packages. That infrastructure today is, for space, just way too expensive, and it doesn't work. But if we can practice with the suborbital tourism mission and continue and build bigger and bigger vehicles, timelines on new Armstrong and so on, I can't really give because we don't know. But what I can tell you is we're going to keep working at those things, step-by-step ferociously. I want to emphasize the ferociously. Linda Mills: All right. We have time for one last question. Tom Costello with NBC.

Tom Costello: Tom Costello with NBC News. Congratulations to all of you. Jeff, to follow up on that question and your discussion there, how do you make this more reasonable for everyday people who would like to fly? It's pretty steep right now. How do you bring the cost down so that this can be more accessible for everybody? Jeff Bezos: It's a great question. How do you bring the costs down over time so it's more accessible to everyone? You've got to do it the same way we did it with commercial airline travel. We're really almost in the barnstormer phase, right? So these are biplanes and they're flying into a farmer's field and charging a small price to fly people around for a few minutes in the air. That's what we're doing right now. But you know where that barnstorming phase leads? To 787s. And that's what we have to do.

Linda Mills: All right. Let's give it a hand. I'm afraid that's all the time we have for questions today. These astronauts have had a very long day, so let's give another round of applause for our astronauts. And then, Jeff, you have one more thing.

Jeff Bezos: Yeah, guys, I have one more thing. I have a little surprise for you. I am announcing today a new philanthropic initiative. And if you could put the slide up so people can see it. It is called the Courage and Civility Award. It recognizes leaders who aim high and who pursue solutions with courage and who always do so with civility. Well, let me tell you how I feel about this. I feel strongly enough I actually wrote something down. We live in a world where sometimes instead of disagreeing with someone's ideas, we question their character or their motives. And guess what? After you do that, it's pretty damn hard to work with that person.

Jeff Bezos: And really what we should always be doing is questioning ideas, not the person. Ad hominem attacks have been around a long time, but they don't work. And they've been amplified by social media. We need unifiers and not vilifiers. We want people who argue hard and act hard for what they truly believe, but they do that always with civility and never ad hominem attacks. And unfortunately, we live in a world where this is too often not the case. But we do have role models. And this award, do you have another slide here? Go ahead. I didn't tell you what the award was yet. I thought there was a slide for that.

Jeff Bezos: Here's what the award is. You see who the first recipient is, but let me tell you what the award is. The Courage and Civility Award is a USD 100 million award so that the awardee, the recipient, can give USD 100 million to the charities, the nonprofits of their choice. And these are people who have demonstrated courage. By the way, it's easy to be courageous but also mean. Try being courageous and civil. Try being courageous and a unifier. That's harder. And way better. And it makes the world better. So we have two awardees today. They'll each be getting USD 100 million to direct to the charities of their choice as they see fit. No bureaucracy, no committees. They just do what they want. They can give it all to their own charity or they can share the wealth. It's up to them. And the first Courage and Civility award goes to Van Jones.

Van, come on up. Van Jones: Thank you, brother. Sometimes dreams come true. Sometimes dreams come true. And the headlines around the world should be anything's possible if you believe. And Lauren and Jeff don't do nothing small, man. They don't do anything small. They just don't do it. They dream big, they love big and they bet big. And you bet on me and I appreciate it. And I'm going to tell you, the only thing I worried about when you say courage, I haven't always been courageous. But I know the people who are, and they get up every day on the front lines, grassroots communities, they don't have much, but they're good people and they fight hard and they don't have enough support.

Van Jones: Can you imagine grassroots folks from Appalachia, from the hood, Native American reservations, having enough money to be able to connect with the geniuses that have disrupted the space industry, disrupted taxis and hotels and bookstores to start disrupting poverty, to start disrupting pollution, to start disrupting the USD 90 billion prison industry together. If you take people on the front lines and their wisdom and their genius and their creativity, and you give them a shot, they're not just going to turn around neighborhoods, they're going to turn around this nation. That's what's going to happen. And I appreciate you for lifting

the ceiling off of people’s dreams.

Van Jones: You have lifted the ceilings off of the dreams of humanity today. And that’s an important thing. Don’t be mad about it. When you see somebody reaching for the heavens, be glad. There’s a lot more heaven up there to reach for. And we can do that together. And the last thing I’ll say is this; if this small group of people can make miracles happen in outer space, a bigger group of people can make miracles happen down here. And we’re going to do it. Thank you very much.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you.

Van Jones: Love you, brother.

Jeff Bezos: Hey guys, can you roll a little video we put together about Van Jones. Can you roll that little video please? Short video.

Speaker 2: Van has been a part of much change. He has birthed a number of different grassroots community organizations. He also helped us bring together climate justice and racial justice, and what that meant in particular for low income communities of color. Van Jones: You can’t live in a country where you just have sacrifice zones, whether we’re talking about South Central or Appalachia or The Rust Belt. And no political party stands up for them effectively.

Speaker 3: He was always so ahead of the curve that a lot of people didn’t understand him. So that was always hard to watch because I know his love for people and for justice. It doesn’t matter to him what people say. He continues to do the work that needs to be done.

Speaker 4: I think about what he’s done within the criminal justice system, what he’s done with making bipartisanship real, not just what think tanks are doing, not researching the idea, not exploring in history how bipartisanship worked. He’s been rolling up his sleeves, he’s been doing the work in real life.

Jeff Bezos: And I know that Van Jones is going to do something amazing with that USD 100 million. I don’t know what yet. I bet he doesn’t know what yet. But it’s in your hands, Van Jones. However you’re going to do it, it’s going to work. We had lunch together a couple weeks ago and he was just telling me some of his life story. And he mentioned that when he was a young activist he was angry, there’s a big transformation that happened over the years. He said that the acronym that he

used was RAP, for reward and punishment. And if the mayor or whoever it was that they were going up against did something they liked, they rewarded him. And if they did something they didn't like, they punished him.

Jeff Bezos: And he said, "Honestly, Jeff, I wasn't very good at the reward part. I really focused on the punishment part." And then he changed. Really, the transformation when you hear his story is unbelievable and profound and inspiring. And I think about this for myself, every night when you go to sleep, you get the chance to wake up better tomorrow. Now we have another awardee. Let's roll that video.

Anderson Cooper: Jose Andres calls himself a pilgrim from Spain. A chef who arrived here 20 years ago with just 50 bucks in his pocket. But these days it's hard to call him anything less than an amazing American success story.

Jose Andres: I know you.

Hillary Clinton: His love of his fellow men and women, his love of eating, which he shares with all of us. He is bigger than life. A force of nature and a real gift.

Stephen Colbert: Michelin star chef who has won James Beard Awards for both outstanding chef and humanitarian of the year.

Speaker 5: Jose Andres is turning several of his DC and New York City restaurants into community kitchens.

Judy Woodruff: He has helped feed those in disaster areas in the US and around the world.

Trevor Noah: Every time I meet you, it's because there's a disaster somewhere in the world. And like a superhero of food, you've stepped in to help feed people.

Speaker 6: He wants to bring people together and he uses food to do that.

Speaker 7: Someone who's extremely generous

Jeff Bezos and Mark Bezos inside the New Shepard crew capsule.

and gives so much to people in need without asking anything.

Jeff Bezos: Jose, please come on up. And he makes a hell of a paella too, I'll tell you.

Jose Andres: I'm so honored. Really grateful for this award and the incredible support from you, Jeff, and the entire Bezos family. World Central Kitchen was born from the simple idea that food has the power to create a better world. A plate of food is a plate of hope. It's the fastest way to rebuild life and communities. And this award itself can not feed the world on its own. But this is a start of a new chapter for us. It's allows us to think beyond the next hurricane to the bigger challenges we face. People of the world, now is the time to think really big to solve hunger with the first urgency of now. The only thing we want to do is revolutionize disaster and hunger relief. People don't want our pity. People want our respect. It's the least we can do is be next to them when things get tough.

Jose Andres: We want to double food aid around the world, and we want to change the way 3 billion people, mainly women, cook their food today from dirty cookstoves to clean cookstoves. We think globally, but we feed locally. And the pandemic drove tens of millions into hunger and starvation last year, this year. The climate crisis is driving millions more across borders. We can and we must respond together, governments, business, nonprofits, every single citizen. Out of empathy, for sure, but also to keep our world safe, stable, and sustainable. We will be there with our boots on the ground when disaster strikes. But we will also shoot for the stars, Jeff, fighting hunger and the causes of hunger. Because whether you are on the ground

or on the top of the world, it’s obvious that we the people, we are one people, one planet sharing our daily bread together. I always say that I believe in longer tables, not higher walls. So Jeff, let’s go and let’s feed the world. Thank you. Thank you.

Jeff Bezos: Long tables and not higher walls. That’s incredible, Jose. And I don’t know what you’re going to do yet, but I know whatever it is you’ll figure something amazing out to do. I know you will. And you’re just an inspiration. A huge inspiration. Thank you. Linda Mills: All right. Well, thank you all for joining us. This wraps our press conference. I’m going to let Oliver lead our astronauts out. And thank you all.

Jeff Bezos: Thank you guys. We know it’s not easy to get here. We know you put a lot of work into coming to this launch and supporting us. And I hope you had some fun and I hope that it was inspiring for you as well. But no matter what, thank you for coming. Very much appreciated. Thank you.