

Rovers On Mars!

By Kim & Julie

Have you ever wanted to live on Mars? Well NASA's Mars rover Spirit is doing that right now!

NASA has sent two solar powered rovers to Mars, the Spirit and the Opportunity. A rover is a machine that has a rectangular head and a long tube like shape that connects it to the body (sort of like a neck). There's a solar panel on top of its body, and six wheels under it. The rovers are used to explore the planets, and are able to send pictures to NASA back on Earth.

Spirit successful landing on Mars was at 8:35p.m. on January 3, 2004 and it's twin, Opportunity, landed at 9:05p.m. on January 24, 2004. Amazingly, the twins were supposed to last for 3 months, but have instead lasted 6 Earth years (3.2 Mars years).

During that time, Spirit has found evidence of a steamy and violent environment on ancient Mars. Opportunity has been operating successfully as it explored halfway around Mars. It documented that Mars is wet and acidic.



Unfortunately nine months ago, Spirit's wheels broke through a crusty surface layer. Spirit is stuck right now in the sand trap. Even worse Spirit's solar panels aren't facing the sun. NASA hopes that the wind will blow the solar panels in the right direction. However, people wonder if Spirit is doomed to lie in the southern hemisphere of Mars forever.

So the questions remain, will Spirit continue or not? What else will Opportunity discover?