My name's Wayne Wong, I'm at the NASA Glenn Research Center, and I am the Advanced Sterling Converter Lead Engineer, and what that entails is I've been working with a company called Sun Power to develop the advanced sterling converter, and this is a key technology for NASA's future radioisotope power systems.

Many of the missions that we've flown already, and these missions have existed for decades, are based on radioisotope power systems.

Basically, these are necessary for any application that doesn't use solar energy or cannot use solar energy.

So what we're developing is a new technology that is much more efficient to make the best use of the limited plutonium that we have currently in the United States.

I'm Chinese and I was born in Hong Kong.

I came over to the United States when I was about three years old, and I've been living
in Cleveland ever since, and I really enjoy my hometown and I've been here my entire life.

I went to college in Cleveland at Case Western Reserve University, and when I was a junior I sought out an internship position, and I was fortunate enough to come to NASA Glenn and spent the summer here.

And when I was here, I saw the wonderful work the Center did and the variety of technologies that NASA was responsible for and I wanted to make a career out of it, and it was at that point, I decided to come to NASA.

I was honored recently to be the recipient of the 2013 Asian American Engineer of the Year Award.

This was a national award that was provided by the Chinese Institute of Engineers.

I was nominated through my management and went through a selection process and ultimately got this award for the work and contributions that I've done in terms of my NASA work on
the advanced sterling converter.

While I’m proud of the award, I’m really glad I was able to be part of this award and ceremony because it put a national spotlight on the contributions of Asian Americans within the realm of science and technology.

To celebrate Asian Pacific Islander Heritage month, for the last several years, I’ve been with the organization that puts on the Cleveland Asian Festival.

Last year, we had over 42,000 attendees at this event, and this year we’re expecting it to be even larger.

I’m really proud of being part of this event because it brings together my hometown Cleveland.

It brings together my Asian heritage, and I am the emcee of the event, and I can talk about how wonderful this event is to all 42,000 people.

I would say the most important thing for a young person that’s trying to make decisions
about careers is exposure.

Seek out every opportunity, whether that's co-oping, internship, shadowing assignments.

Visit workplaces of friends and relatives just to see what real jobs are like and what day to day activities are, and answer for themselves: Is this what I want to do as a career?