

## *Waterford Elementary School Experiment Takes Spaceflight to International Space Station*

Waterford, NJ -- An experiment using eggplant seeds designed by Waterford Elementary students is taking flight all the way into space aboard the International Space Station (ISS).

The winning students designed the experiment titled “Galaxy Eggplants,” which is currently scheduled for launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on August 1, 2017.

The experiment was chosen from over 50 proposals submitted by Waterford Elementary School students as part of The National Center for Earth and Space Science Education’s Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP).

*“SSEP provides students with the most realistic scientific work experience. This competition mimics the process of scientists responding to a ‘call for proposals’ and provides two very unique educational opportunities. The students must first pose an interesting scientific question regarding the nature of the physical, chemical or biological system. Then, through collaboration, they must engineer an experiment that can answer that question within the stated experiment specifications and operational constraints. SSEP helps students develop the skills necessary to become leaders in the next generation workforce.”*

“Galaxy Eggplants” was created by Mrs. Parker’s sixth grade Science students Abigail Baines, Ava Brennan, Marley Brennan, Angelina Mott, and Hailey Reese.

“Galaxy Eggplants” tests the results of microgravity on eggplant seeds while in space. Astronauts aboard the ISS will test the seeds in low Earth orbit. The students will also perform a control experiment on Earth in order to observe the differences between both experiments.

Students feel the results of the test could be significant in furthering the understanding of plant growth in space, which could be a step toward sustaining human life in space.

“Galaxy Eggplants” students and other finalists from Waterford Elementary - “Perfect Crystals in Space”- will be presenting their experiments on June 28-29, 2017 at the Smithsonian National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

A Mission Patch by sixth grader Riley Clark and second grader Joshua Johnson will also be launched to the ISS as part of SSEP Mission 11.

The SSEP is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSE) in the U.S. and the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Space Education internationally. It is enabled through a strategic partnership with DreamUp PBC and NanoRacks LLC, which are working with NASA under a Space Act Agreement as part of the utilization of the International Space Station as a National Laboratory. SSEP is the first pre- college STEM education program that is both a U.S. national initiative and implemented as an on-orbit commercial space venture.