



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 3, 2017

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East to Send Experiment to the International Space Station

Rochester is One of 21 Communities in the United States and Canada Selected For "Mission 11"

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) has chosen East High School as a participating school for Mission 11 to the International Space Station. The student research team of De'Aunte Johnson, Binti Mohamed and Tailor Davis was selected to have its experiment, "The Effect of Microgravity on the Deterioration of Chlorophyll in Phytoplankton," flown to the International Space Station.

During September and October, student teams at East developed and submitted research proposals to test the effect of microgravity, with the winning proposal chosen to fly in a mini-laboratory to the International Space Station in spring/summer 2017. The student proposals were reviewed by a local review board, and narrowed down to three proposals, which were then sent to a national review board for final selection.

The launch of Mission 11 to the International Space Station is currently scheduled on a SpaceX-12 rocket, blasting off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Fla., adjoining Kennedy Space Center, in June 2017. The experiment will spend at least six to eight weeks in orbit before returning to East, where students will then complete an analysis of their experiment.

"This program is important for our students because it gives them the chance to participate in real science research that can actually make a difference in the world. Students will be participating in the very real process of competing for space aboard a research laboratory, just as real-world scientists do, and their research will be used by others as we work toward a goal of space colonization," said Mary Courtney, a chemistry teacher and SSEP community project director at East.

Once the winning experiment is aboard the space station, astronauts will interact with it, based on guidelines supplied by student scientists. This may include mixing and shaking various components. The experiment will be contained in a simple tube where up to three materials can be separated using clamps, which can be opened by the astronauts at specified times to mix components while in space.

The winning team will be invited to present the results of their research at the SSEP National Conference at the National Air and Space Museum. "To be able to describe this experience on a college application would make them stand out from other candidates. Very few high school students ever have this type of an

opportunity. Being able to show our community that our scholars are interested, capable and motivated is incredibly important for our school, our students and our district,” added Courtney.

East High School received financial commitments of \$14,000 through the Rochester Area Community Foundation and Farash Foundation, \$6,000 from Praxair, Inc. (an industrial gas company in Buffalo, NY), \$3,000 through University of Rochester and \$1,000 from Subaru USA to help support this school-wide initiative that will impact students across multiple grade levels at East.

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSSE) 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.

About the University of Rochester/East EPO Partnership

The University of Rochester, as the Educational Partnership Organization (EPO) for East High School, has assumed full management responsibilities for East, effective July 2015. The new East (<http://www.rcsdk12.org/east>) consists of a Lower School (grades 6-8) and an Upper School (grades 9-12), and aims to prepare all students for a successful transition into adulthood. A comprehensive community school with a robust set of services to support its diverse students, East offers a strong academic and career preparation program, including a daily advisory program and a full complement of athletic and extra-curricular activities that support and engage students.

