



Higher Orbits

through science, technology, engineering & math

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HIGHER ORBITS STUDENT EXPERIMENT LAUNCHES ABOARD BLUE ORIGIN NEW SHEPARD

LEESBURG, Virginia, Dec. 11, 2019 – Blue Origin’s New Shepard launch from the West Texas desert this morning marked its 9th payload mission including access to space for several student designed research projects.

The December 11th launch, New Shepard’s 12th flight (NS-12), hosted an art in space project created by participants of nonprofit Higher Orbits’ *Go For Launch!* educational experience that uses space to promote science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM) education. High school student participants work with astronauts and scientists to develop STEM or STEAM projects that are launched to sub-orbital space or to be conducted on the International Space Station. Team Northern Lights members Madelyn Heaston, Katja Kirchner, and Aliah Haigh art in space experiment design won the *Go For Launch!* Full STEAM Ahead Seattle 2019 and the opportunity for their art-based research project to be conducted in microgravity. *Go For Launch!* Seattle was held in January at the The Museum of Flight and made possible by the generous support of Higher Orbits Big Bang Sponsor American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA).



Named after Mercury astronaut Alan Shepard, the first American to go into space, New Shepard is Blue Origin's reusable suborbital rocket system designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Kármán line – the internationally recognized boundary of space. The 11-minute flight of Team Northern Lights' experiment on New Shepard will be the experience of a lifetime for these high school students. The New Shepard NS-12 flight will provide about 3 minutes of high-quality microgravity to conduct Team Northern Lights art-based experiment.

“The goal of this experiment is to determine microgravity's effect on creating art. It will test how the paint spreads onto the canvas as well as how the three different colors mix. It will also be interesting to see how the flight back to earth will affect the art.” said Aliah Haigh, who is an 11th grade running start student at Bellevue College in Bellevue Washington. “I believe that taking art into space is going to be the next step because space is a whole new realm to explore and experiment in. Our experiment in particular is very important because it can inspire other teens to see that they can make an impact in the art community by reaching into the unknown.”

Dan Dumbacher, AIAA Executive Director, said “supporting students is a mission priority for AIAA. These students are showing how creative space research can be. I hope they inspire students around the world to launch their own research projects or find new ways to be part of the amazing space community. Congratulations to Aliah, Madelyn, and Katja!”

Students are grateful for AIAA's sponsorship and the organization's belief in their ability to contribute to the space science community of research. “I worked alongside an astronaut, learned about the wonders of space, strengthened my team-building and public speaking skills, and even designed a winning project that is being launched into space. The *Go For Launch!* educational experience has inspired me to be more creative, think way outside the box, and discover more about my full potential and future career choices.” said Aliah.

“We are honored to have the continued partnership of AIAA and Blue Origin in our mission to inspire the next generation of innovative and creative STEAMists and Explorers -- our future workforce,” said Michelle Lucas, Higher Orbits founder. “Space inspires! Through the generous and continued support of our mission partners like AIAA, The Museum of Flight, and Blue Origin, we are able to bring our life-changing *Go For Launch!* spaceflight STEAM experience to students throughout the United States.”

About Higher Orbits

Higher Orbits is a 501(c)3 non-profit that uses spaceflight to promote science, technology, engineering, art and math while strengthening leadership, teamwork, and communication skills. Higher Orbits conducts *Go For Launch!* and *Go For Launch!* Full STEAM Ahead events across the country and partners with companies and organizations to achieve educational goals that launch the next generation of scientists, researchers

and creators. To learn more about 2020's events and inspire the next generation of STEMists, STEAMists and explorers, visit HigherOrbits.org.

About AIAA

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) is the world's largest aerospace technical society. With nearly 30,000 individual members from 85 countries, and 95 corporate members, AIAA brings together industry, academia, and government to advance engineering and science in aviation, space, and defense. For more information, aiaa.org, or follow us on Twitter @AIAA.