



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact:** Michelle Lucas

Higher Orbits

707-893-STAR

michelle@HigherOrbits.org

## ***2 Go For Launch! Student Experiments arrive at International Space Station Aboard Orbital ATK Cygnus Spacecraft***

*Division Winning Experiments Selected From Programs in Gilbert, AZ & Herndon, VA join first Go For Launch! Experiment from Deerfield, IL*

November 14th, 2017 – [Higher Orbits](#), a non-profit with the mission of promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, is excited to have 3 student experiments from their space inspired STEM program *Go For Launch!* on board the International Space Station after the launch of [Orbital ATK](#) mission OA-8 on November 12<sup>th</sup> with docking to the International Space Station occurring today. Two experiments were launched aboard OA-8 and are joining an experiment that was previously launched aboard SpaceX-12 in August.

The first is the winner of the Orbital ATK Division of *Go For Launch!* This experiment came from the Gilbert, AZ program and the winning team is the Saguaro Snakes. “Saguaro Snakes” include Ian Anderson, Devin Askue, Rian Espinosa, Nicolas Jepsen and Abigail Youngker. Their experiment will evaluate the growth of microclover (changed from the initial idea of peanut plants due to space limitations, though the same experiment intention) in microgravity and how nitrogen deposited in the soil can be used to grow additional plants in space. We are grateful to [Orbital ATK](#) for their Division sponsorship, which made this experiment launch possible. Thanks to travel support from Southwest Airlines all 5 students were able to attend the launch out of Wallops Island.

The second experiment that was launched aboard OA-8 was the winner of the [AIAA](#) Middle School Division. Team Operation Galaxy X came from the *Go For Launch!* Herndon, VA program and is comprised of Desmen Boykin, Savar Shrivastava, Steven Van Hulle, and Shashank Varma Nadimpalli. Their experiment will study the life cycle and reproduction of mealworms in space. We are grateful to the [American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics](#) for their Division Sponsorship that made the launch of this student experiment possible.

The experiment already aboard the International Space Station was from Team DASA, the winner of the *Go For Launch!* 2016 Andromeda Division and came from the *Go For Launch!* Deerfield, IL program. Students from team DASA include Justin Bank, Chirag Goel, Dan Kimbich, Zach Levy and Katharine Stecher. Their experiment is evaluating the effects of radiation on living cells in space and also tests various passive shielding methods. Their experiment will be moved into Cygnus as part of operations that will extend the space station lab into the Cygnus module for part of its time docked to the International Space Station.

All of these experiments are/will be executed inside the International Space Station within the TangoLab operated by [Space Tango](#). The hardware facility inside the space station allows for multiple CubeLab experiments to run automatically and is an ideal platform for leveraging student engagement. All of the Higher Orbits *Go For Launch!* experiments to date have been done in partnership with Space Tango.

“Without sponsors such as Orbital ATK, AIAA, Southwest Airlines and our partner for the actual experiment Space Tango, it wouldn’t be possible to launch these students “dreams” to space. We are grateful for the continued support and appreciate these companies commitment to supporting the next generation of STEMists and Explorers,” says Michelle Lucas, founder of Higher Orbits, and the *Go For Launch!* Program Director.

*Go For Launch!* was created and presented by Higher Orbits to promote space exploration for aspiring students through interactive, hands-on activities delivered by experienced industry professionals. During the program, students worked with former astronauts, former International Space Station and Space Shuttle controllers, astronaut instructors, scientists and engineers. Working in teams, students sharpened their communications and leadership skills while designing innovative science experiments that could be flown to the International Space Station. Students presented the final product to a panel of judges representing space and STEM fields.

Based on the success of this program, Higher Orbits plans a variety of STEM-driven initiatives aimed at reaching students nationwide in 2018 including returns to Gilbert, Northern Virginia, and the Chicagoland area. Sponsorship opportunities are available at various levels for individual events, divisions/series, or the overall program. For more details please contact Michelle Lucas at [GoForLaunch@higherorbits.org](mailto:GoForLaunch@higherorbits.org) or call 707-893-STAR.

### **About Higher Orbits**

Higher Orbits is a 501(c)3 non-profit with the mission of promoting Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM); along with leadership, teamwork, and communication through the use of spaceflight. Mankind's journey into space serves as an ideal launchpad to excite students of all ages about STEM and working to fulfill their dreams and ambitions. Higher Orbits uses a variety of programs and partnerships with other organizations to achieve these goals and is excited to be holding events across the US again, including Northern Virginia, in 2018. To learn more visit <http://www.HigherOrbits.org> , or follow us on Twitter @HigherOrbits

### **About Orbital ATK**

Orbital ATK is a global leader in aerospace and defense technologies. The company designs, builds and delivers space, defense and aviation systems for customers around the world, both as a prime contractor and merchant supplier. Its main products include launch vehicles and related propulsion systems; missile products, subsystems and defense electronics; precision weapons, armament systems and ammunition; satellites and associated space components and services; and advanced aerospace structures. Headquartered in Dulles, Virginia, Orbital ATK employs approximately 12,500 people in 18 states across the U.S. and in several international locations. For more information, visit [www.orbitalatk.com](http://www.orbitalatk.com).

### **About AIAA**

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) is nearly 30,000 engineers and scientists, and 95 corporate members, from 85 countries who are dedicated to advancing the global aerospace profession. The world’s largest aerospace technical society, the Institute

convenes five yearly forums; publishes books, technical journals, and *Aerospace America*; hosts a collection of 160,000 technical papers; develops and maintains standards; honors and celebrates achievement; and advocates on policy issues. AIAA serves aerospace professionals around the world—who are shaping the future of aerospace—by providing the tools, insights, and collaborative exchanges to advance the state of the art in engineering and science for aviation, space, and defense. For more information, visit [www.aiaa.org](http://www.aiaa.org), or follow us on Twitter @AIAA.

### **About Space Tango**

Space Tango streamlines and simplifies the unique environment that microgravity offers to design, build, and operate integrated systems that facilitate microgravity R&D and manufacturing focused for application on Earth. Space Tango allows users to focus on their work while managing the complexities of traveling to and operating in microgravity. Space Tango is committed to the standardization of processes to provide a seamless experience. Space Tango is developing an entire pipeline of products to increase the variety, volume and ease of using this new frontier. Space Tango strives to diversify the use of microgravity as they invite industries of any kind to reach beyond in hope of improving life on Earth. For more information, visit [www.spacetango.com](http://www.spacetango.com).

For more information about the *Go For Launch!* program visit [www.GoForLaunch.space](http://www.GoForLaunch.space) or follow us on Twitter @HigherOrbits. Photos are available on request of the experiment, students at launch, and from the original events. Interviews, including with the Astronauts who participated in these events, also available upon request.

#####