

Rhode Island's first space-to-school chat with the Int'l Space Station

"RI Space Chat" Scheduled for Friday, May 6th

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Middletown, RI



All Saints STEAM Academy
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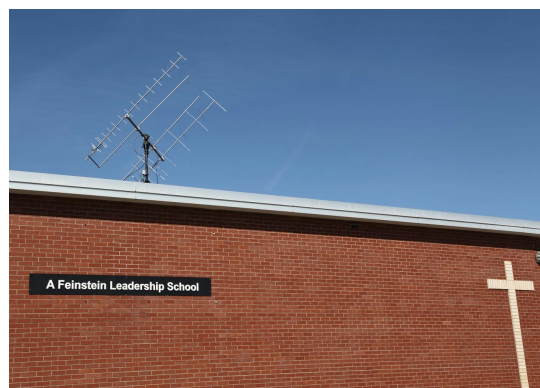
On Wednesday, leaders of the global space communications consortium, Amateur Radio aboard the International Space Station, confirmed that Rhode Island's first ever space-to-school chat has been scheduled for **Friday May 6** as the ISS begins a noon-hour pass near Rhode Island.



While access to the school will be limited due to space constraints, the general public is invited to enjoy the event via a large projection screen -- courtesy of *newportFILM* -- at the nearby St Lucy's Catholic Faith Community, 909 West Main Rd, Middletown. The formal pre-chat event starts at 11:55AM and will also be live streamed to other audiences via Livestream.com. Seating is limited and the public should obtain no-cost tickets via EventBrite using keywords "RI Space Chat."

School students are scheduled to talk with ISS astronaut Jeff Williams who has Rhode Island connections and is a veteran of two previous ISS missions in 2006 and 2009-2010. Williams graduated from the U.S. Naval War College in 1996 and received an honorary doctoral degree from Johnson & Wales University in 2007.

24 Rhode Island students, grades 1-8, including seven from other schools who won slots from entries in a "Ask Astronaut Tim" contest, will ask their questions via a high-powered radio link operated by members of the Newport County Radio Club.



This press release is online at:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m6cgGqKDEPAkZfnKEeLsTv_x_p6tkOEUxgwIpnTLbqag/edit?usp=sharing

In May 2015 the Middletown school was chosen as one of 6 U.S. schools to host a radio contact with the International Space Station during the first half of 2016.

During the last school year, five AS2A middle school students passed the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) amateur radio examination and earned their official call signs. Mike Cullen, a local STEAM advocate and retired IBM executive, has managed all facets of this space station contact event, including securing the unique FCC call sign *N1ASA* for the school's amateur radio club.



Event host and organizer, All Saints STEAM Academy, is a grade PK-8 Catholic school that offers an array of STEAM projects -- coding, robotics, cyber security competitions, and amateur radio -- as co-curricular activities.

AS²A has been working on this opportunity for over a year with technical experts from the Newport County Radio Club (NCRC) which has been supporting the local amateur radio community since 1947, and has provided the school with technical mentors.

NCRC Secretary Bob Beatty said, "It was natural for NCRC to partner with All Saints Academy since amateur radio is powered by science, technology, engineering, art and math (STEAM). This partnership is beneficial for both the young students who become better equipped for 21st Century technical careers in Rhode Island, as well as the future of our hobby which relies on the creative minds of innovators."

The voice contacts with the space station use amateur radio frequencies and last about 10 minutes — the average length of an orbital pass — and give students a chance to interact with an astronaut in a rapid fire, question and answer format. NASA promotes the program as a win-win: the crew member gets a psychological boost speaking with smart, inquisitive youngsters, and the students earn a lifelong memory and experience the tangible benefit of pursuing STEAM career paths.

As preparation for this contact, All Saints' students have been participating in many space-themed activities integrated into their day-to-day curriculum, including a discussion on weather, exploring numerous milestones during the Cold War era (including the 1960's race to the moon), managing looming cyber threats across space programs, dealing with space debris, and discussing a range of social justice questions.

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The school sponsored a statewide “Ask the Astronaut” contest which solicited potential questions from RI students. Over 210 questions flowed in from 18 schools. The winning students and their schools will be announced shortly this week.

Sponsors -- providing key technical, logistical, marketing, and financial help - include:

St Lucy’s Catholic Faith Community, Salve Regina University, Bristol Community College, RI Dept of Education, KVH Industries, Newport County Radio Club, newportFILM, Middletown Fire Dept, ATC Tech, PSAV, East Coast Robotics, ISS-Above, IBM International Foundation, Arts & Cultural Alliance of Newport County, IEEE-Providence chapter, Druyan-Sagan Associates, and Sony/ATV Music.

Links to photos in this press release

1. Astronaut Jeff Williams in hi-res (credit: NASA) - <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B6PlqkpJCjh6UV9FRkJuMzIYR28>
2. Directional ham radio antennas (credit: All Saints STEAM Academy) - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tfQht81ZVX04NOZFtJ7ap9rK45nKSizKHA/view?usp=sharing>
3. Ham radio club students (credit: All Saints STEAM Academy) - https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y5HqhOcX686nXqLyqtWWUkJ_HTG1HkkT7w/view?usp=sharing

Informational web links:

- All Saints STEAM Academy -- www.allsaintsacademy.org
- Newport County Radio Club -- www.W1SYE.org
- ARISS Project -- www.ariss.org

Broadcast media: Please note that we will be controlling/recording/streaming audio/video in a former remote news truck at the school venue and expect to be able to provide you with quick download of event material.

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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m6cgGqKDEPAkZfnKEeLsTv_xp6tkOEUxgwIpnTLbqag/edit?usp=sharing