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LOCAL STUDENTS TO TALK TO ASTRONAUTS ON INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Amateur Radio connects kids, crew as ISS orbits overhead

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Students at Woodruff Middle School in Seabrook, NJ will be in communication with astronauts on the International Space Station via Amateur Radio in early 2027. This activity is part of the ARISS (Amateur Radio on the International Space Station) Program, which promotes learning opportunities as part of the STEM (Science, Technology, Education and Math) initiative. Woodruff Middle School was among 13 schools in the United States selected for this opportunity. While other schools in New Jersey have been selected in the past, Woodruff Middle School is the first school ever in South Jersey to be selected for an ARISS contact. STEM advisors Angela Metzger and Jamie Munyon submitted the proposal in the Spring and are overseeing all aspects of the ARISS contact.

Lessons about space, astronauts, the ISS, space travel, space communication and amateur radio are being incorporated into all subjects during the 2026-2027 school year. Some of these activities include the following: reading a space fact during morning announcements, designing an ISS mission patch, participating in physical fitness activities to train like an astronaut, using coordinate grids to plot the ISS movement, conducting experiments modeled after those on the ISS, and writing biographies on past astronauts.

The Gloucester County Amateur Radio Club (GCARC) will be assisting with the ARISS contact. Members of the club have been working with students in the Woodruff Middle School STEM Club for the past three years. Students have participated in balloon launches and soldering projects in addition to learning about amateur radio logistics.

What is ARISS?

ARISS is a joint venture by NASA, the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS), the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), and the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation (AMSAT) to facilitate communication via Amateur Radio between astronauts aboard the International Space Station and schools and communities around the world. ARISS programs excite and motivate students in a one-of-a-kind presentation and exchange. One of the goals is to inspire an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) subjects and in STEM careers among young people.

What is Amateur Radio?

Amateur, or “Ham,” Radio, is a popular service and hobby in which federally licensed participants operate communications equipment. There are over 700,000 licensed amateurs and nearly 2,300 ARRL-affiliated Amateur Radio clubs in the United States. Angela Metzger, STEM advisor and 7th grade math teacher, is a licensed amateur radio operator (also known as HAM) and a member of the GCARC.

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More information on the ARISS program can be found at **www.ariss.org**.
More information on Amateur Radio can be found at **www.arrl.org/what-is-ham-radio**.