



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Boy Scout Experiment Set to Launch to the International Space Station
U.S. National Laboratory**

Chicago, IL — Boy Scout Troop 209 will watch the biology experiment they designed and built take off for the International Space Station (ISS) aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, targeted to launch on Sunday, August 13.

Troop 209's experiment will compare the rate at which DNA mutates in a microgravity environment versus on Earth using a scientific process called the Ames test. The troop's findings could impact research on everything from tissue growth to cancer.

"I remember at the beginning of the project [our leaders] told us that there are researchers in their 40s, 50s, older than us, who would die for a chance to do this," said 13-year-old Boy Scout Stephen Ma. "We're all pretty excited to watch it go up."

The journey to this point has been almost as exciting as the launch itself for Norman McFarland, a longtime Boy Scout volunteer and retired Siemens engineer who serves as the project's lead adult volunteer.

McFarland and 13 other adult volunteers have helped guide the troop's 12 Scouts, who range in age from 11 to 18, through more than 5,200 hours of work across 2 years.

"I am just so proud of this team. We started with young students and they have developed into young engineers, building, testing, resolving issue by issue until we have reached a final solution."

The launch will mark the culmination of a unique program partnership between the Boy Scouts of America Pathway to Adventure Council, based in Chicago, and the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) — the non-profit organization that manages the U.S. National Laboratory on the ISS.

"We at CASIS are proud partners of the Boy Scouts of America, and we are extremely pleased to see the Pathway to Adventures Council take a leadership role in STEM education innovation through the utilization of the ISS National Laboratory," said CASIS Director of Operations and STEM Education Ken Shields. "There is little doubt that many of these Space Station Explorers will be our country's future scientists, technologists, and engineers."



The SpaceX Falcon 9 is targeted to launch from the Kennedy Space Center with the experiment aboard on Sunday, August 13. Thanks to donations from local businesses and countless community members, many of the Scouts will travel to Florida to see the launch in person.

The public can watch all the behind-the-scenes action and see the launch from the Scouts' perspective via their livestream on August 12th and 13th. Get the livestream schedule at <https://tinyurl.com/troop209launch> and watch at <https://www.facebook.com/pathwaytoadventure>.

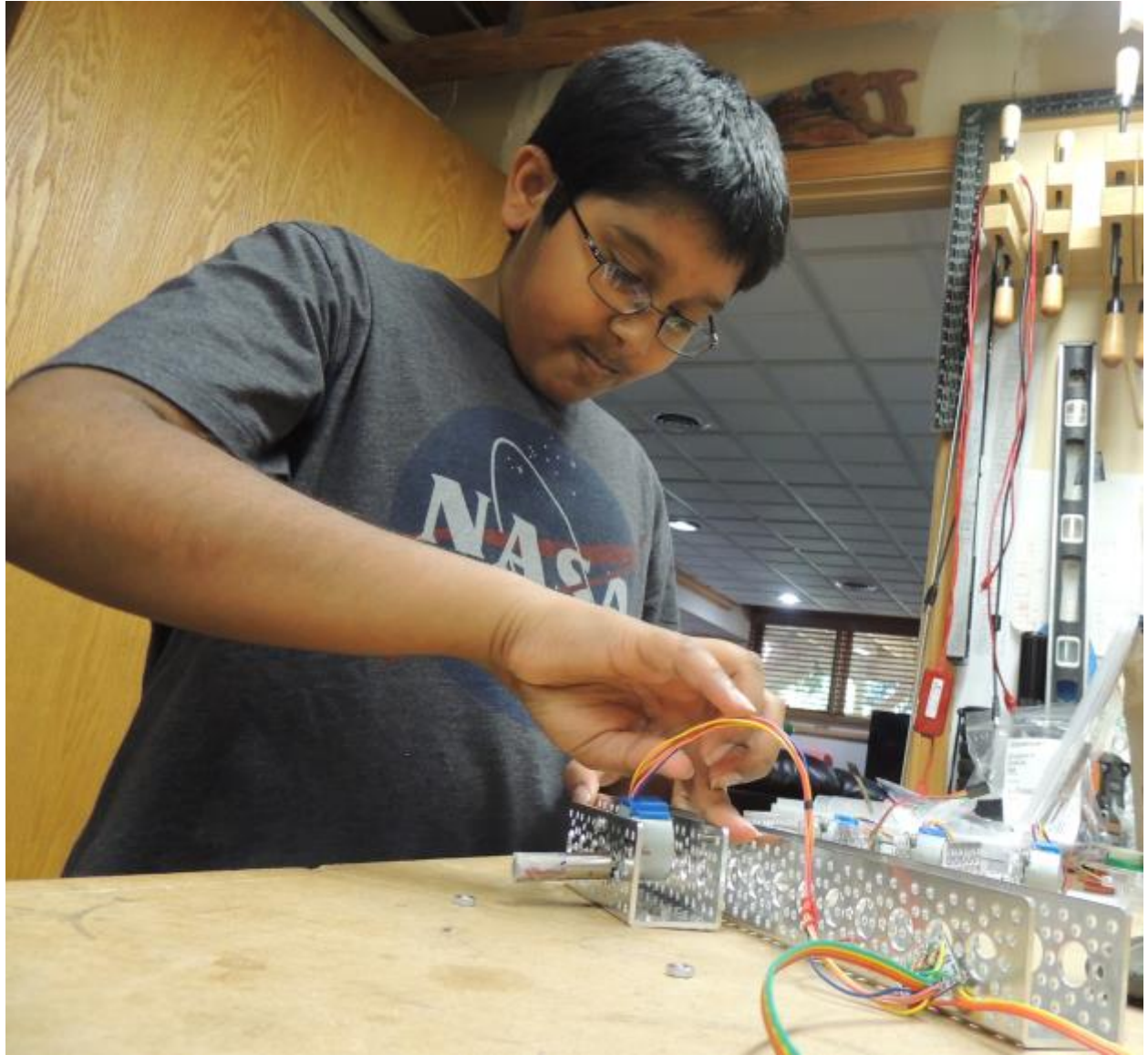
Media Opportunities:

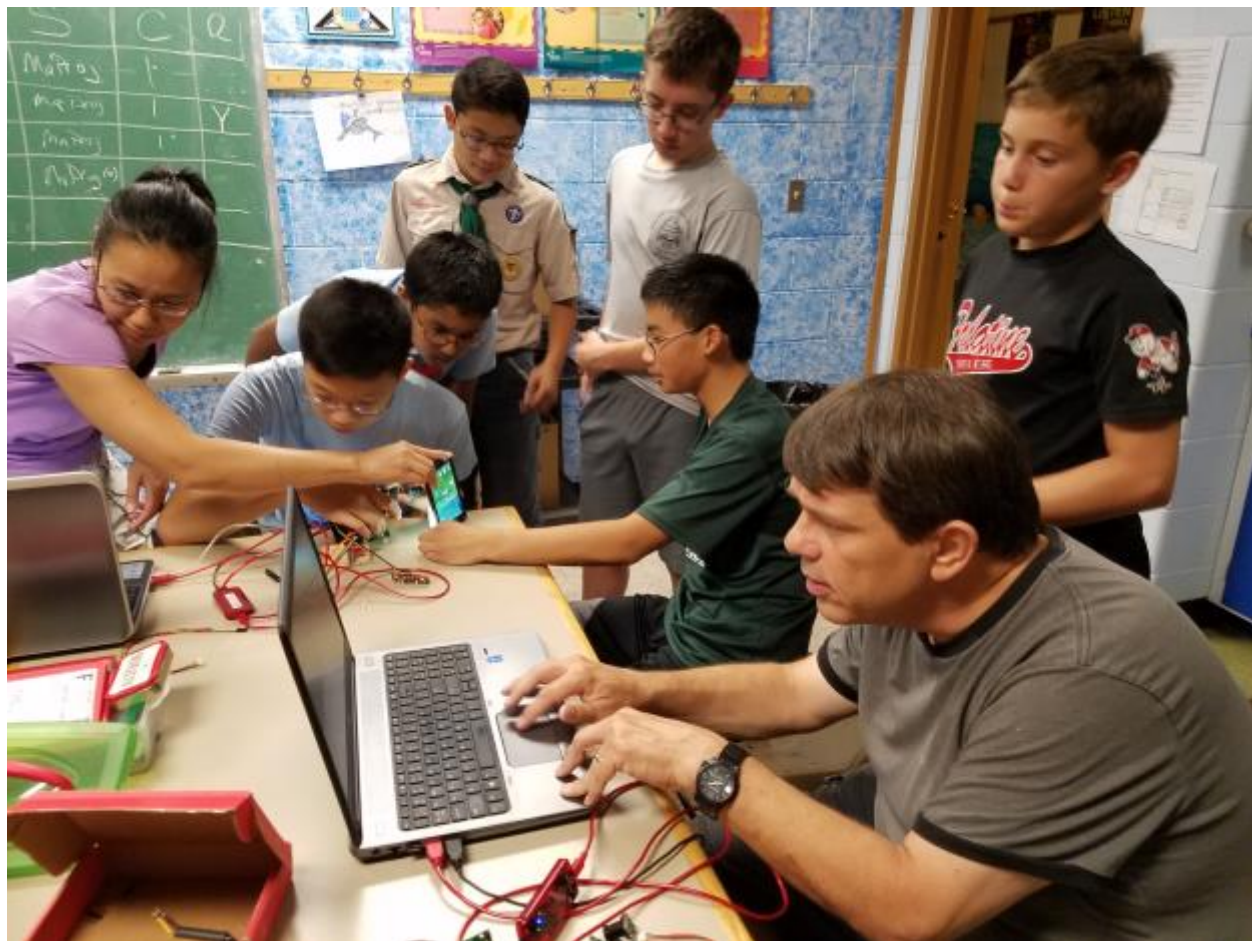
1. Troop 209 Scouts and adult leaders are available for in-person or phone interviews upon request to Kate.Jacobs@Scouting.org.
2. Media is invited to attend the final Scout meetings during which the troop will put the finishing touches on their space and ground experiments. The meetings are currently scheduled for 7:30 PM on Monday, August 7 and Tuesday, August 8 at the First United Methodist Church at 123 N Plum Grove Rd, Palatine, IL 60067. Email Kate.Jacobs@Scouting.org if you would like to attend.

About the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America provides the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training, which helps young people be "Prepared. For Life. ®" The Scouting organization is composed of nearly 2.3 million youth members between the ages of 7 and 21 and approximately 960,000 volunteers in local councils throughout the United States and its territories. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, please visit www.scouting.org. To learn more about the Pathway to Adventure Council, visit www.PathwaytoAdventure.org.







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