



For Immediate Release
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Elms Girls Walk in the Shoes of NASA Scientists and Engineers

AKRON, Ohio (November 9, 2011) Students from Our Lady of the Elms School had the opportunity to live the life of NASA Mission Control specialists recently, not by reading a book or watching a video, but rather through first-hand experience with simulated space missions at Wheeling Jesuit University's Challenger Learning Center in Wheeling, W.Va.

From navigating a safe and successful probe launch to solving a life-threatening radiation problem, Elms girls truly "walked in the shoes" of NASA engineers for a day filled with imagination, creativity and discovery.

"The overall goal of the mission is to improve students' problem-solving skills and enhance their creative and critical thinking ability," said Jackie Shia, Director of the Challenger Center. "The missions also go a step further to foster teamwork and plant the seeds for long-term interest in science and math."

"This realistic approach to science inspires our girls to develop a desire to participate in the sciences," said Cristina Jones, Our Lady of the Elms Middle School Science Teacher. "Because of the simulated situation, they use problem solving skills in a cross curricular, cooperative and supportive environment. After the experience the students are better equipped to work collaboratively with their peers and solve problems."

As stated by Elms eighth grader, Taya Lee, "Now I like science more than I already do!" Seventh grader Grace Prem stated, "It gave me an idea of what working for NASA might be like."

The Center offers two simulated experiences for students: working in a space station while in orbit and working with Mission Control, an operational hub modeled after NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

During the two-hour mission, students serve on one of eight teams. Through the power of imagination and the excitement of discovery, students assume the roles of NASA engineers and scientists to monitor astronaut vital signs, analyze test results, and solve problems, all to ensure a successful space mission.

“All teams must work together to reach a common goal and each student plays an integral part in making this possible,” says Shia. “It’s amazing to see the energy that’s created among these kids as they learn more about the importance of math and science.”

Wheeling Jesuit University integrates the Jesuit traditions of intellectual excellence with the best of advanced technology to educate students for life, leadership and service. The only Catholic institution of higher education in West Virginia, Wheeling Jesuit offers more than 30 undergraduate programs of study and six graduate degrees to about 1,500 students each year. The campus is home to the Robert C. Byrd National Technology Transfer Center, the Erma Ora Byrd Center for Educational Technologies, a Challenger Learning Center and the Clifford M. Lewis, S.J., Appalachian Institute. To arrange a visit to the Challenger Learning Center, call 304-243-8740 or visit the Challenger Learning Center online at <http://clc.cet.edu>.

Our Lady of the Elms School, an independent, Catholic school rooted in the Dominican tradition, educates girls and young women to listen openly, evaluate wisely, speak bravely, lead justly, and serve compassionately. For more information, please contact Carli Kistler-Miller at 330.867.0148.

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