

THE NATIONAL SPACE SOCIETY ANNOUNCES THREE NEW STEM EDUCATION GRANTS

Funds From the Club for the Future to be Distributed to Space STEM-Based Education Programs

WASHINGTON, D.C., US, July 26, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [National Space Society](#) has announced the next three recipients from its space STEM education program. The grants, which are derived from a grant from the [Club for the Future](#), Blue Origin's space education nonprofit, are being allocated to deserving space STEM education projects identified and vetted by the NSS.



Students participate in hands-on learning by launching a weather balloon with Atlantis Educational Services, an NSS grant recipient. Credit: SpaceTrek

"The National Space Society's new educational grant program is an important step toward providing support for educators and nonprofits who are influencing the next generation of space professionals and practitioners," said Michelle Hanlon, President of the National Space Society. "I can think of nothing more important for the future of humanity."

The first of three new grants will go to Kids Read!, a nonprofit dedicated to providing STEM books to children in need. These funds will be used to purchase and distribute space-related books, as identified on a list curated by the NSS, to underserved elementary school children attending Title I schools. The CEO of Kids Read! is Barry Ackerman, co-founder of the Orange County Children's Book Festival, and Kids Read! was founded by elementary school student Megan Mettler as a public service school project. To date, they have served over 157,000 children around the world.

The second grant will go to Atlantis Educational Services, an educational resource organization located at the Kennedy Space Center and founded by Abishek Agrawal. The funds are earmarked for the creation and operation of a new program, the Space Settlement Design Competition for College Students, in which college-aged students compete to design realistic human settlements for use off-Earth. This is an extension of the International Space Settlement Design Competitions, which has been active around the world for over 30 years. The broader program utilizes mentors, advisors, and judges from aerospace engineering and has served tens of



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*Michelle Hanlon, NSS
President*

thousands of aspiring students, many of whom have continued on into rewarding careers in aerospace engineering.

The third grant was awarded to SteamSpace, a nonprofit STEM education program operated by founder and CEO Holly Melear. The funds will support SteamSpace's Cities in Space's annual conference and competition held in Austin, Texas, which grants awards for the best design of an off-Earth human space settlement or affiliated emerging technologies. The conference allows students to meet and learn from established space professionals in a variety of fields, including astronauts, engineers, scientists, space entrepreneurs, and artists. The program has been offered

both in-person and virtually and serves k-12 students, who are encouraged to follow their passion, whether it be engineering, science, entrepreneurship, or the arts.

"These grants support the National Space Society's vision and will provide education relevant to our core mission: making humanity a spacefaring species," said Dale Skran, NSS COO. "The NSS believes that we will not just go into space just for research, but to thrive and provide lasting benefits to Earth. Our educational mission encompasses all aspects of space STEM and STEAM, and it's important to integrate the arts and humanities into scientific and engineering disciplines. Via these and future grants, awarded from the \$1,000,000 grant generously provided to us by the Club for the Future, we are supporting a new generation of explorers, technologists, artists, educators, and many others, who will one day ply their trades in space."

All three organizations will also support the NSS/Club for the Future Space Postcard program, in which the NSS provides postcards to participating children to write or draw on about their dreams of spaceflight. The postcards are then flown into space by Blue Origin aboard their New Shepard spacecraft, then returned to the students as an inspiring keepsake.

The National Space Society was founded in 1987 via a merger of the National Space Institute, founded to promote citizen support for the American space program, and the L5 Society, based on the work of space settlement pioneer Gerard K. O'Neill. The NSS is the preeminent citizen's voice on space exploration, development, and settlement. For more information go to space.nss.org.

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