



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Walker Elementary students sending signatures to space

In celebration of Space Day 2009, students at Walker Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District joined more than 500 schools around the world by signing Student Signatures in Space® posters.

Student Signatures in Space® provides an opportunity for elementary and middle school students to send digitized signatures into space and “feel a personal involvement with the crew and the mission.” The program is sponsored by NASA and Lockheed Martin and is an educational initiative for Space Day, which has been held on the first Friday in May since 1997.

Each class at Walker signed the poster, which was divided into equal sections so that each room had the same amount of space. Classes were also involved in a variety of lessons about space.

Second graders in Debbie Haalboom’s class wrote haiku poetry with space themes. After watching a video about space for inspiration, students worked by themselves and as partners to create the correct syllable patterns for each line of their haiku. Some chose to write about stars, while others chose the moon or the Milky Way.

Christy Pierce illustrated a lesson to her fifth graders using the book, “We Interrupt This Broadcast,” by Joe Garner. She also shared a story about meeting NASA astronaut Story Musgrave at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Pierce gave her class copies of a biography fact sheet autographed by Musgrave. Hanging on the whiteboard at the front of the room was a poster with the words ‘Failure is not an option’ and an image of the Apollo XIII mission patch.

The signed posters will be carried into space on a shuttle mission to the International Space Station in November. After the signatures return from space, the posters will be sent to the schools for permanent display, along with a flight certificate and a picture of the space crew.

The ultimate goal of the program is “to promote math, science, technology and engineering education by nurturing young peoples’ enthusiasm for the wonders of the universe and inspiring them to continue the stellar work of today’s space explorers.”

Since 1997, more than 5.5 million students have participated in Student Signatures in Space®. Participation is limited to approximately 500 schools each year because of space constraints on each mission. Schools can only participate in the program once every six years.

Photo Information

Haalboom_poster – Debbie Haalboom, a second grade teacher at Walker Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District, shows a group of students where to sign their names on the Students Signatures in Space® poster during an academic activity for Space Day 2009.

Pierce_poster – Christy Pierce, a fifth grade teacher at Walker Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District, looks on as her students wait to sign their names on the Student Signatures in Space® poster in celebration of Space Day 2009.

The Hazelwood School District serves nearly 19,000 students and is the second largest district in St. Louis County. Communities in the district include Hazelwood, Black Jack, Spanish Lake, a large section of Florissant, portions of Bridgeton, Bellefontaine Neighbors and Ferguson, and several square miles of unincorporated St. Louis County. The mission of the Hazelwood School District is to launch learners on a quest for high standards, fairness and distinguished achievement.