



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SALADO INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS TO TALK TO AN ASTRONAUT ON INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Amateur Radio connects kids, crew as ISS orbits overhead

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Students at Salado Intermediate School, located at 550 Thomas Arnold Rd. in Salado, TX will talk with Astronaut Scott Tingle, KG5NZA, on the International Space Station via Amateur Radio at 11:44 am on Tuesday, April 17, 2018. 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. The event is by invitation only due to limited space.

Salado, Texas is a small community with a population of about 2,100. It is located off I-35 between Austin and Waco. Salado Independent School District has 1,841 students of which 567 attend Salado Intermediate School. Dr. Michael Novotny is superintendent of SISD, Burt Smith is assistant superintendent of SISD, and Beth Aycock is principal of SIS.

Space and radio related activities, lessons, and speakers have been included in this year's curriculum. Speakers included an educational specialist from NASA EPD, an aerospace engineer from NASA, and a former Apollo and Shuttle engineer. Science and Engineering Day had an array of speakers including an amateur radio operator, a local astronomer, a former NASA Goddard and U.S. Army person who spoke about satellite imagery, a meteorologist, a spokesperson from the Mayborn Planetarium, and a pilot. A Star Party was hosted by SIS with the assistance of area astronomers with over 100 students and community members attending. Honors students visited Space Center Houston and had a video conference with former astronauts and current directors of Johnson and Kennedy Space Centers, Dr. Ellen Ochoa and Robert Cabana.

ARISS representative, Ronny Risinger, has provided invaluable guidance in preparation for the contact. He installed the satellite tracking/communication station at Salado Intermediate and provided other radios for students to practice for the event. Risinger, KC5EES, is the Trustee for K5LBJ, the LASA High School Amateur Radio Club in Austin, Texas. The equipment used in this contact was built by student members of K5LBJ.

The contact will be direct with the astronaut asked questions by selected Salado Intermediate School students. The approximate length for the audio contact is ten minutes, the amount of time the International Space Station will fly overhead.

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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.

ARISS program goals are:

- Inspiring an interest in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) subjects and in STEM careers among young people.
- Providing an educational opportunity for students, teachers, and the general public for learning about wireless technology and radio science through Amateur Radio.
- Providing an educational opportunity for students, teachers, and the general public for learning about space exploration, space technologies and satellite communications.

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. Hams talk to each other across town, around the world, and even into space without the need for normal communications infrastructure, such as cell phone networks or the Internet. Amateur Radio is regularly used during natural disasters to help local emergency and served agencies (such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, and state and local governments) respond when normal communications methods are disrupted. The Amateur Radio community is a great source of electronics experimentation, public service, and fun.

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**.