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Schools

SHS Students Celebrate Launch of Endeavour

A group of students had the rare opportunity to send their science experiment into space.

By [Leah Salomoni](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 16, 2011

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Credit [Leah Salomoni](#)

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After months of delays and waiting, space shuttle STS-134, the flight of Endeavour finally launched Monday morning. [Shelton High](#) seniors Leann Misencik, Kayla Russo, Jason Shnipes, Omar Sobh and Jimmy Szabo watched the historic event with their classmates and family during a small celebratory party during school that morning.

[The group's experiment](#), titled "Development of Prokaryotic Cell Walls in a Microgravity Environment" is one of only sixteen across the entire country and the only in New England to be chosen to be sent on board the shuttle. It is part of a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education.

While astronauts carry out the experiment in space, the students used PerkinElmer labs to do the same here on Earth as a control. Their hypothesis is that bacteria will become more susceptible to antibiotics in space because cell walls may be weaker due to less gravity.

"We are very eager to analyze the data and apply it to the fields of science and medicine," said Sobh.

The group recently traveled to Florida to watch the shuttle launch, but "there was a delay due to a mechanical problem," said Sobh.

Though disappointed they weren't able to see Endeavour take off, the trip was not in vain.

"While there, we met groups from around the country and were given an opportunity to present our proposals to others at a conference that took place at the Florida Institute of Technology," Sobh said.

Sobh's father, Tarek Sobh, Dean of the School of Engineering at University of Bridgeport, said he is extremely proud of his son and the rest of the group.

"Someone like me would wait a lifetime for something like this to happen," he said. "So for these kids, at this age, to happen to them is simply amazing."

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12:34pm on Monday, May 16, 2011

I am so glad these kids got to watch the launch after all! Sorry you couldn't be down in FL. Congratulations to all of you (and your parents). Another reason to be proud to live in Shelton!!

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