

**PRESS RELEASE - For Immediate Release**

**THOMASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**185 BRANCH ROAD**

**THOMASTON, CT 06787**

**860-283-3053**

**860-283-3096**

**WWW.THOMASTONSCHOOLS.ORG**

**FRANCINE COSS, SUPERINTENDENT**

**Thomaston Students Participate in Soar to the Stars**

**Event for girls interested in STEM**

**HARTFORD, CT** – On Saturday, October 27, 2018, Thomaston Public School students from Grades 7, 8 and 9 participated in the “Soar to the Stars Girls STEM Experience” event put on by “Soar to the Stars” and sponsored by the Petit Family Foundation, AETNA and the Space Foundation.

The powerful event was developed to inspire young girls who are interested in or who may become interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

Jennifer McDonald, mother of two of the Thomaston students stated about Thomaston’s students, “They met Miss Connecticut, Astronaut Colonel Lockhart, and many other amazing people...what a great experience they had! They loved it.”

Sallie Barlow, Mom of one Thomaston participant was pleased “that some girls from Thomaston attended this great experience.”

The five Thomaston Middle School and High School students who attended the event are pictured below: Left Photo: From Left to Right: Isabella Brostek (Grade 7), Therese



McDonald (Grade 7),  
Mary Lockhart,  
President and CEO  
PEMDAS Technologies  
and Innovations, Paul  
S. Lockhart, USAF, Ret.,  
Former NASA  
Astronaut, Jessica  
Barlow (Grade 8),  
Sandra McDonald  
(Grade 9) and Marie  
Morey (Grade 8). Right  
Photo: Dr. William Petit  
and Jessica Barlow  
(Grade 8).



Photo Below: Marie Morey (Grade 8) with her STEM event creation.



#### BACKGROUND:

By 2023 half of all U.S. jobs will be in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), yet, too few students are pursuing majors in those areas, hindering our global competitiveness. The Soar to the Stars Girls STEM Experience is only the beginning. Through your support we hope to continue providing robust and immersive STEM education programs in the east coast area. In doing so, this further fulfills the Petit Family Foundation's and Space Foundation's mission to educate young people, especially girls and women in science.

The Petit Family Foundation and the Space Foundation are proud to host a free STEM experience for girls in the Hartford area, with interactive activities to spark their interest in the sciences. Girls age 12 to 18 years will be able to participate in four different hands-on activities, led by Space Foundation accredited and award-winning educators, all of whom are former classroom master teachers.

#### Schedule of Events

7:15AM	Check-in
8:00AM	Welcome / Breakfast
8:10AM	Women in Science Panel / Q&A
9:00AM	Hands-on STEM Activities
12:00PM	Closing Remarks
12:30PM	Luncheon with Guest Speaker Paul Lockhart, USAF, Ret. Former NASA Astronaut
2:00PM	Event Conclusion

Saturday's Soar to the Stars event featured a series of hands-on STEM activities and a Women in Science Panel consisting of:



Mary Lockhart  
President and CEO  
Technologies  
and Innovations



Karolyn Maloney  
Senior Director of IT Hygiene  
Program and Identity and Access  
Management, Aetna



Bridget Oei  
Miss Connecticut



Dr. Kathy Thornton Professor  
University of PEMDAS®  
Virginia Former Astronaut,  
Board Vice Chairman -----  
Space Foundation

Saturday's Soar to the Stars event also included a luncheon speaker:



Paul S. Lockhart, USAF, Ret.  
Former NASA Astronaut

### Lockhart Biography

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### About Soar to the Stars

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### About The Petit Family Foundation

The Petit Family Foundation is a 501c3 organization that memorializes Jennifer, Hayley and Michaela Petit by continuing the kindness, idealism and activism that defined their lives. The Foundation's funds are given to foster the education of young people, especially women in the sciences; to improve the lives of those affected by chronic illnesses; and to support efforts to protect and help those affected by violence. [www.petitfamilyfoundation.org](http://www.petitfamilyfoundation.org)

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## About The Space Foundation

Founded in Colorado Springs in 1983, the Space Foundation is the world's premier nonprofit organization to inspire, educate, connect, and advocate on behalf of the global space community. We are a nonprofit leader in space awareness activities, educational programs, and major industry events, including the annual Space Symposium, the largest annual gathering of space professionals in the world. Through our robust education program offerings, more than 46,000 students and teachers received in-person, hands-on STEM education, using the excitement of space to turn young people's attention to the fascinating world of science and technology. [www.spacefoundation.org](http://www.spacefoundation.org)

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Francine Coss, Superintendent of Schools  
[fcoss@thomastonschools.org](mailto:fcoss@thomastonschools.org)