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# Students program for space station

■ North Idaho STEM students compete in contest

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Posted: Thursday, August 15, 2013 12:00 am

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RATHDRUM - Some students at the North Idaho STEM Charter Academy have received space-age training this summer.

Several fifth- through eighth-graders recently competed in a national contest culminating on the International Space Station.

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The ISS, which can be seen with the naked eye from Earth at certain times, serves as a research lab in space.

In the Zero Robotics program, each student was involved in programming small satellites, called spheres, to maneuver and function in zero gravity on the ISS.

While the local students' work was not chosen for the contest on the ISS, teacher Dave Johnson said it was a valuable experience. Satellites from chosen schools competed in a live race on the ISS while performing certain tasks, including laying down dust clouds, avoiding opponent dust clouds and obtaining objects.

"The program taught students about writing code programming, the space program in general and working with teams under a tight deadline," Johnson said.

Students who participated include: Derrick Blake, Bailey Brodwater, Brandon Brown, Selina Brown, Scott Callister, Levi Davidson, Chance Foss, Christopher Hartman, Justin Kugler, Sam Lewis, Jessica Millard, Ashton Portrey, Marissa Rec, Cami Rolen, Aydan Salois, Henry Schmick, Daniel Simmons, Josh Simmons, Weston Thomson, Cara Williams, Jonathan Williams and Sarah Williams.

The students on Tuesday joined other teams throughout the nation to watch the competition via an uplink through Jet Propulsion Laboratories and NASA to the ISS. The viewing was held at their school as a congratulatory and recreational wrapup to weeks of hard work.

The Zero Robotics program was sponsored locally through the nonprofit Discover Technology managed by Lorna Finman, who is one of the school's board members, and nationally through Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

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