



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **Isle of Man students make their mark at NASA United Space School in Houston**

**Douglas, Isle of Man – 20 September 2017**

Three Isle of Man students who spent their summer holidays at NASA United Space School planning a simulated manned mission to Mars have had their achievements marked by the Department of Education and Children.

Ciara Sowerby from Ballakermeen High School, Jowi Szetu, from Castle Rushen High School, and Will Farrant from Ramsey Grammar School were winners of scholarships awarded by the ManSat Group to attend the United Space School in Houston for two weeks at the end of July.

The year 13 students worked with peers from more than 20 countries on planning the Mars mission, supported by NASA astronauts, engineers and scientists.

On Wednesday (September 20), the trio attended DEC headquarters at Hamilton House in Peel Road, Douglas, to meet Minister Graham Cregeen MHK and receive certificates marking their incredible adventure.

Ciara, who is studying mathematics, chemistry and biology at A-level, said: 'There was no doubt in my mind that it was going to be a once in a lifetime trip. However, the experiences and friendships that it has given me have been more exceptional than I could have hoped.

'My favourite part was seeing the Mission Control room for the Apollo missions – it was amazing to think about the historical significance of the room. Getting to know all the other students was also incredible, they were all so nice and it was great exploring all of their different cultures.

'Space School has influenced me in deciding that I would like to complete a neuroscience degree and then hopefully do some work in the space industry. To any year 12s who are thinking about entering the 2018 competition – go for it! It is an amazing experience and I made some great memories with some fantastic people.'

Will is studying mathematics, physics and Spanish at A-level. He said: 'Each group played a specific role in achieving a successful mission to Mars. I was part of the maroon team, in charge of the descent and ascent vehicles and mechanisms required to get the kit onto the surface.



'Over the two weeks we visited the Museum of Natural Sciences, Space Center Houston, and had a tour of Johnson Space Center. There were other activities, including a night at an observatory, where we were shown different planets and constellations of stars. And there were fun evenings with our host families where we were able to spend time with each other, so it wasn't all work!

'This trip has definitely given me an insight into where I would like to go with my career, and provided me with many contacts from around the world. What stayed with me the most was the feeling at the end of the final presentations when everything came together and we were able to see the progress we had made. It was pretty special at our final graduation to meet another NASA Astronaut, Doug Wheelock, who was there to give us some great life advice and some really motivational words.'

Jowi, who is studying mathematics, further maths, physics and computer science at A-level, said: 'It has to be one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. While in Houston I was put under the care of my host family, where I stayed with three other boys, who were from India, Canada and France. They were amazing hosts who really welcomed us into their home and made us feel like family.

'At school, I was picked for Red team, which was responsible for the design of the rockets that would be traveling between Earth and Mars. Over the two weeks I had the pleasure to work with people from all around the world, and the experience has helped me develop my interpersonal skills and form friendships with my team and others on the program.

'We had some amazing guest speakers, such as astronaut and space station commander Leroy Chiao. Hearing from people who have worked in the industry was inspirational and made me seriously consider it as a career choice. What will stay with me from this trip are the friendships I made with the other participants – I now have a network of friends all around the globe with whom I'm still in contact.'

Manx satellite firm the ManSat Group has awarded the Space School scholarships each year since 2000, in cooperation with the Department of Education and Children. From 2007, ManSat gave two scholarships a year, and last year increased it to three.

ManSat Chief Financial Officer Ian Sanders said: 'Ciara, Jowi and Will were wonderful ambassadors for their schools and the Isle of Man. Providing the scholarships to the United Space School scholarships is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable things we do as a company, and as ever we are grateful to the



Department of Education and Children, the secondary schools and King William's College for their cooperation and support.

Graham Cregeen MHK, Minister for Education and Children, said: 'It was lovely to meet Ciara, Jowi and Will and fascinating to hear about their adventures during their time at United Space School. The scholarships provide an incredible opportunity for our young people, and we are proud to play our part in making this happen each year.'

Please visit [www.unitedspaceschool.org](http://www.unitedspaceschool.org) for more information about the Space School and [www.mansat.org](http://www.mansat.org) for details of the company's scholarships.

## **ENDS**

**(879 words)**

### **Captions:**

- 1. From left – Ian Sanders, ManSat's Chief Financial Officer, 2017 NASA United Space School scholarship winners Jowi Szetu, Ciara Sowerby and Will Farrant, and Minister for Education & Children Graham Cregeen MHK*
- 2. From left – Year 12 students Jowi Szetu, Ciara Sowerby and Will Farrant, who won scholarships from the ManSat Group to attend the 2017 NASA United Space School*

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

### **ManSat Limited**

ManSat carries out satellite filings for the Isle of Man under a contract with the Isle of Man Government's Communications Commission. Isle of Man's satellite filings are made to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) in Geneva via the administration of the United Kingdom (Ofcom).

Established in May 1998, ManSat Limited is a Manx registered and Manx owned private limited company headquartered in Douglas in the Isle of Man, with offices and representation in the United Kingdom and the United States.

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