



NEWS RELEASE

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Students all systems go for Houston after winning ManSat Group's NASA Space School scholarships

Douglas, Isle of Man – 17 July 2018

Students from the Isle of Man are about to embark on a thrilling mission to NASA to attend the United Space School (USS) in Houston.

Caitlin Gelder and Marc Podmore, from Castle Rushen High School, and Gemma Tipper, from King William's College, are this year's winners of the ManSat Group's scholarships to spend two weeks at the USS.

The Year 12 students will work with peers from more than 20 countries on planning a simulated manned mission to Mars, supported by NASA astronauts, engineers and scientists.

Manx satellite firm the ManSat Group has awarded the Space School scholarships each year since 2000, in cooperation with the Department of Education, Sport and Culture. ManSat carries out satellite filings for the Isle of Man under a contract with the Isle of Man Government's Communications Commission.

Gemma is studying for the International Baccalaureate, for which she is taking three 'higher level' subjects – maths, physics and economics – and three 'standard level' subjects – Spanish, English literature & language, and visual arts.

She said: 'I want to study for a Masters in computer science at university in the UK, and then move into working on software development or AI development, which I think is a really exciting field with lots of momentum to become a huge industry in modern society.

'I've always looked up to NASA with admiration as an organisation that is responsible for some of the most advanced technology we have, with a surprisingly small budget, and one that broke mankind's final frontier, to quote Captain Kirk. Looking further into the USS, I realised this would be an opportunity to work with completely new people from around the globe on a project, just as I might do in a professional environment.



'It's fantastic to be put in a large group of people, all with different cultures and experiences, and who all have a common passion: Space. Of course, I'm also looking forward to being at NASA in Houston and learning more about space travel.

'I'd like to thank ManSat for this amazing opportunity, one that I'm certain I will never forget. I would also like to thank my teachers, particularly my Physics teachers, for all their support (and excitement) through these past months.'

Marc is studying maths, physics and chemistry at A-level and is aiming for a career in astrophysics after university.

'I am looking forward to travelling to America for the first time, meeting loads of like-minded people and making new friends, and getting to do what I love, surrounded by loads of people who love doing it too – it's going to be absolutely fantastic!' said Marc.

'It will also help me gain many skills that will be useful in later life – I'm sure it will be one of the best experiences of my life. I would like to thank Jennifer Stone and everyone at ManSat for this fantastic opportunity, and my teachers Dr Holmes, Mr Swinhoe, and Mr Danielson for all of their fantastic advice.'

Caitlin is studying maths, physics and biology at A-level, and took chemistry at AS-level.

'I learnt about the ManSat space school scholarship when I was just nine, and I've known from a young age that space was always what I wanted to do,' explained Caitlin. 'I haven't pinpointed precisely which path I want to follow yet, so I am keeping my options open. Hopefully, with experience and exposure to the industry, I will grasp a more precise idea of where a wish to work. However, the thought of astronomy research, satellite communications and mission science all really appeal to me. My dream is to work for places such as the ESA or NASA.

'I visited the Kennedy Space Center in the summer of 2016. It inspired me to push harder in studies so that I can help to be a part of the space industry in the future.

'I wish to thank everyone at ManSat for giving me this once in a lifetime opportunity, and my parents. I'd also like to thank my hero, astronaut Nicole Stott (wife of ManSat CEO Chris Stott). She inspired me to work hard and push for my dreams.'

Dr Jennifer Stone, ManSat's Senior Manager for Regulatory Affairs, was the winner of the company's first ever USS scholarship in 2000.



She said: 'Attending the Space School was an incredible experience and propelled me to many exciting adventures in my career. Knowing the impact that the school had on my life, I am very happy to be sending Gemma, Caitlin and Marc on their way. They are in for a life-changing summer during which they'll be working with amazing people from around the world and enjoying behind the scenes access to NASA facilities.'

'As always, the standard of entries for the competition was very high, and we would like to thank all the students who took the time to enter. We are grateful to the Department of Education, Sport and Culture, the Island's secondary schools, and King William's College for their support of this opportunity for Isle of Man students.'

Graham Cregeen MHK, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, said: 'It's incredible to think that, with Gemma, Caitlin and Marc heading to Houston this summer, it will mean the Isle of Man has sent 36 students to the USS since 2000. The experiences they gain there will stand them in good stead for their future career decisions and I'm looking forward to meeting them on their return to find out about their adventures.'

ManSat also supports the annual Conrad Spirit of Innovation competition for Manx high schools, in cooperation with Apollo Astronaut Pete Conrad's Foundation, and has sponsored Island high schools to participate in the UK Rocketry Challenge. In addition, the company awards an annual 'ManSat Fellowship' grant, for Manx students seeking to further their studies in space, and scholarships to programs run by the International Space University in Strasbourg.

Please visit www.unitedspaceschool.org for more information about the Space School and www.mansat.org for details of the company's scholarships, and www.mansat.com for details on ManSat itself.

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(1,002 words)

Caption:

Students Marc Podmore, Gemma Tipper (centre) and Caitlin Gelder, who are set to fly to Houston after winning ManSat scholarships to NASA's 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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