

You are at: ALA.org » News » Illinois public library to connect kids with NASA astronaut in space; libraries invited to tune in



# Illinois public library to connect kids with NASA astronaut in space; libraries invited to tune in

Thu, 06/16/2016



## Contact:

Sarah Ostman  
Communications Manager  
ALA Public Programs Office  
312-280-5061  
[sostman@ala.org](mailto:sostman@ala.org)

Kids at Gail Borden Public Library in Elgin, Illinois, will have the opportunity to speak live with an astronaut at the International Space Station on Thursday, June 30, thanks to a NASA educational program.

The 20-minute virtual program will be broadcast live on [NASA TV](#) at 11:35 a.m. EDT / 10:35 a.m. CDT, and other libraries are invited to stream the event. (See below for viewing details.)

Gail Borden Public Library is one of eight public libraries nationwide to host [Discover Space: A Cosmic Journey](#), a traveling exhibition offered by the American Library Association (ALA) Public Programs Office in partnership with the Space Science Institute's National Center for Interactive Learning, the Lunar and Planetary Institute and the Afterschool Alliance. The interactive exhibition, made possible through the support of the National Science Foundation, is designed to promote STEM learning for all ages.

As part of their *Discover Space* programming series, Gail Borden Public Library successfully applied to host a [NASA In-Flight Education Downlink](#), which allows educational organizations like libraries and schools to host virtual meetings with astronauts. Students converse with the astronauts and learn about science, technology, engineering and math concepts "in ways that are impossible on Earth," according to the NASA website. The library will host this and [other space themed programming](#) through July 8, 2016.

"We are all so excited to be speaking with astronaut Jeff Williams because he is so experienced and knowledgeable when it comes to the International Space Station," said Denise Raleigh, division chief of public relations and development at the library. "Our kids are fascinated to learn what life is like for the astronauts, and we're proud to be able to provide this kind of once-in-a-lifetime experience."

The young people speaking to Williams will range from second to fifth grade. Students applied to participate through their schools, proposing to ask questions such as, “After all the training, what surprised you about the ISS?”; “Are you nervous, or do you have enough training that you are not nervous?” and “Does the food taste better in space or on Earth?”

Williams, a NASA astronaut since 1996, has performed various technical duties in both the space shuttle and International Space Station programs. On his current mission, he is expected to [set a U.S. record](#) for the most cumulative days — 534 — in space. Williams has studied at the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Postgraduate School and the U.S. Naval War College.

Following the Downlink event, Gail Borden Public Library will video-conference with Elgin native Hal Getzeman, the International Space Station’s lead CAPCOM, or “capsule communicator,” from NASA headquarters in Houston.

**To watch the NASA Downlink live**, visit the following link on June 30 at 12:35 a.m. EDT / 11:35 a.m. CDT: <http://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv>. Please note that the start time may shift by up to 10 minutes to accommodate last-minute changes in the astronaut’s schedule. Therefore, we recommend logging on at 12:25 a.m. EDT / 11:25 a.m. CDT.

To learn more about hosting a NASA In-Flight Education Downlink in your library, visit <http://www.nasa.gov/offices/education/centers/johnson/downlinks>.

For resources to help create library STEM programs, visit the STEM Resource Clearinghouse on the [STAR\\_Net \(Science-Technology Activities & Resources for Libraries\) website](#).

### **About the ALA Public Programs Office**

ALA’s Public Programs Office provides leadership, resources, training and networking opportunities that help thousands of librarians nationwide develop and host cultural programs for adult, young adult and family audiences. The mission of the ALA Public Programs Office is to promote cultural programming as an essential part of library service in all types of libraries. Projects include book and film discussion series, literary and cultural programs featuring authors and artists, professional development opportunities and traveling exhibitions. School, public, academic and special libraries nationwide benefit from the office’s programming initiatives.

[Log in](#) or [register](#) to post comments

---

[Copyright Statement](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Site Help](#) | [Site Index](#)

© 1996–2016 American Library Association

**ALA**AmericanLibraryAssociation

50 E Huron St., Chicago IL 60611 | 1.800.545.2433