

# Students 'blast off' after space program saved

May 23 2014, by Kathy Matheson

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Students at Project SPARC, the nickname, of Northeast High School's Space Research Center take part in a virtual space mission, Thursday, May 22, 2014, in Philadelphia. School officials say SPARC launched about 50 years ago as the first NASA-recognized high school space program. But funding problems threatened to end it this year. Alumni raised money to save SPARC, and students "blasted off" on a two-day mission Thursday. They are expected to stay the night at school to finish the mission Friday. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

Students in Philadelphia are attempting to virtually colonize the moon

now that their beloved space program has been saved from the budget ax.

Project SPARC is the nickname of Northeast High School's Space Research Center. It includes a 21-foot-long shuttle simulator and an actual Apollo mission training capsule.

School officials say SPARC launched about 50 years ago as the first NASA-recognized high school space program. But funding problems threatened to end it this year.

Alumni raised money to save the program, and students "blasted off" on a two-day mission Thursday. They spent the night at school and planned to finish the mission Friday.

Supporters see the rebirth as an opportunity to revitalize the [program](#). A NASA spokeswoman says hands-on experiences are the best way to get [students](#) interested in science.



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Kevin Feng, center, Leon Frame, center right, Jonathan Seitz, and Elizabeth Mekler, right, at Project SPARC, the nickname, of Northeast High School's Space Research Center take make preparations in a 21-foot-long shuttle simulator for their virtual space mission, Thursday, May 22, 2014, in Philadelphia. School officials say SPARC launched about 50 years ago as the first NASA-recognized high school space program. But funding problems threatened to end it this year. Alumni raised money to save SPARC, and students "blasted off" on a two-day mission Thursday. They are expected to stay the night

at school to finish the mission Friday. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)



Students at Project SPARC, the nickname, of Northeast High School's Space Research Center make preparations at mission control, left, next to a 21-foot-long shuttle simulator, for a virtual space mission on a, Thursday, May 22, 2014, in Philadelphia. School officials say SPARC launched about 50 years ago as the first NASA-recognized high school space program. But funding problems threatened to end it this year. Alumni raised money to save SPARC, and students "blasted off" on a two-day mission Thursday. They are expected to stay the night at school to finish the mission Friday. (AP Photo/Matt Rourke)

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