



For Immediate Release  
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## **AFA Announces StellarXplorers III National Champions**

COLORADO SPRINGS, Co. – The Air Force Association today announced the National Champions of StellarXplorers III, the National High School Space Challenge held in Colorado, April 6-8, 2017. Ten National Finalist teams representing schools and other organizations from Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Oregon, Texas and Kaiserslautern (Germany) competed in the Space Foundation's Discovery Center on a challenging space system design problem.

The StellarXplorers III National Champion is the “Sky Dragons” team from San Pedro High School, San Pedro, CA. The “Scintillators” from the Kaiserslautern American High School from Kaiserslautern, Germany, finished in second place, followed by the “Rocketeer Steers” of Graham High School, Graham, TX. Each student in these teams received educational grants, sponsored by the United States Air Force science, technology, education and math (STEM) Program and United Launch Alliance.

“StellarXplorers was a valuable experience! These young scientists are the key to the future of our nation,” said Ms. Michelle Lowery, Team Director of the Rocketeer Steers. “It was impressive to watch the way in which the students worked together as a team to meet the real-world challenges presented by the StellarXplorers III Competition.”

Students were required to define an optimal satellite orbit, choose spacecraft components, and select rocket boosters to meet a stringent set of mission requirements in an intense eight-hour period. The next day, teams were required to present a scored briefing about their solution to a panel of experts.

“The caliber of these competitors is just unbelievable,” said Stephen K. Gourley, Director of StellarXplorers. “Our National Champions actually solved the mission requirements we gave them better than we in the Program Office expected! We're thrilled to be offering a program that generates such excitement amongst students and their educators.”

StellarXplorers, an education initiative established by AFA, is a one-of-a-kind space system competition designed to inspire students toward futures in STEM fields. Program sponsors for this season included the US Air Force and DoD STEM Programs, United Launch Alliance, Orbital ATK, Blue Origin, Kratos Defense Company, SpaceX and

Lockheed Martin. Analytic Graphics, Inc. and the Space Foundation have been joined by Coyote Enterprises and Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University as the StellarXplorers Educational Alliance.

**The Air Force Association is a non-profit, independent, professional military and aerospace education association. Our mission is to promote a dominant United States Air Force and a strong national defense, and to honor Airmen and our Air Force Heritage.**

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