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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Release 16-07-07/001  
July 7, 2016

### AFTAC continues to support STEM outreach

*By Susan A. Romano, AFTAC Public Affairs*

**PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE, Fla.** – While children from Brevard County elementary schools were putting their science knowledge to work, more than a dozen members of the Air Force Technical Applications Center were volunteering their time to help make the event a success.

The National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers (NOBBChE) hosted a Science Bowl May 21, 2016 at the University of Central Florida in Orlando for students in elementary, middle and high school. More than 50 students participated, including AFTAC's own community school, Endeavour Elementary.



The NOBBChE Science Bowl consists of students competing in teams of four. Challenge questions are based on an overall understanding of physical sciences (primarily physics and chemistry), life and earth sciences, engineering, mathematics and an emphasis on black scientists and inventors.

AFTAC has been partnering with Endeavour since early 2015, with its Airmen serving as science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) mentors for students at the Title I school. This was the second time Endeavour participated in a NOBBChE-sponsored science bowl.

"I was delighted to volunteer my time to serve as a moderator for the competition," said 1st Lt. Joshua Hall, a data analyst at AFTAC. "One of the best things we can do is give back to our community, and it makes it even more impactful when our time is spent in an educational capacity. I was really impressed with the STEM acumen of the participating students."

Messiah Parker, a 6th grader in Ms. Kathy McHardy's class, was thrilled to participate in his first science competition. "I really wanted to compete in this science bowl so I could gain more knowledge," he said. "I'm a little nervous, but we studied really hard and practiced with buzzers and stayed after school for about three months to get ready for this. I'm so excited!"

Officially called "Panther Pride" after their school mascot, but better known to their fellow students as "The Outsmarters," Messiah's teammates were Maurice Robinson, Obrien Ortiz and Marshall Sasnett. The quartet were advised by Endeavour teachers Stephanie Lay and Mikki Corriveau.

In addition to Endeavour's involvement, Rose Day, AFTAC's human resources program manager, reached out to other local Brevard County schools to inform them of the opportunity to participate. One school, Quest Elementary in Melbourne, signed up to be a part of the program.

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## **2-2-2 BOWL**

"This is a brand new concept for our school and our students," said Beth Conti, Quest's science bowl coordinator and teacher at the K-6 school. "We have three teams in grades five and six participating, and they've been practicing and studying after school for the past several weeks to make sure they're prepared. I'm confident they're going to do well!"

One of Quest's competitors, Jada Strayer, was a member of a study group as they prepared to compete in the bowl.



"We read a lot of books and looked up a lot of information on web sites," said the 11-year-old. "We focused on math and science mostly. I am excited to be here today because I want to win!"

Jada's mother was equally excited for her daughter.

"I'm so glad Jada decided to join in on this opportunity," Tamara Haven said. "She used to be very timid and didn't believe she could do something like this. She'd stress out over an upcoming exam, then when she'd come home with a 100 on the test, I'd say, 'See? I told you that you could do it!' Win or lose, I'm so very proud of her."

Quest's "Explorers" team took first place in the competition, with Endeavour's "Outsmarters" coming in a close second.

Both schools hope to be able to participate in NOBBChE's National Science Bowl, which will be held in November in Raleigh, N.C.