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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local School Sends Experiment to International Space Station

After a devastating failed launch in October 2014, Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston science students celebrated the launch of a re-engineered slime mold experiment to the International Space Station (ISS) late Sunday night.

The experiment is part of the payload aboard the SpaceX-9 flight that launched from Cape Canaveral. In October 2014, a previous group of Cristo Rey Jesuit students, who are now in college, were at Wallops Island in Virginia when a flight carrying two of their experiments exploded on the launch pad.

"Of course we were all crushed," said project leader and science teacher Greg Adragna. "But these kids bounced back and never gave up. It's an honor to have a science experiment sent into space through a partnership with NASA, CASIS and NanoRacks."

Once the slime mold experiment is loaded onto the space station, coconut water will be pumped into slime mold petri dishes to feed them. Slime molds are single-celled organisms that can communicate with each other through chemical signals and can "learn" despite not having brains. Every five minutes, cameras will take photos, creating a time-lapse film, indicating if the slime mold is confused by the lack of gravity in space.

"After the explosion, a new group of students re-engineered the device and wrote the programs," said co-investigator and Cristo Rey Jesuit science teacher Peter Rispin. "By solving problems themselves for such a sophisticated device, our students were exposed to engineering, programming, and science problems that they would not normally experience until later in their college education."

The experiment will be conducted in space for nearly 25 days before heading home to be analyzed.

To view the launch, please go to <http://www.spacex.com/webcast>.

About Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston

Cristo Rey Jesuit College Preparatory School of Houston opened its doors in August 2009 with 80 young men and women and has grown to a student body of more than 500 over the past seven years. Sponsored by the Jesuits of the United States Central and Southern Province, Cristo Rey Jesuit offers a rigorous college preparatory education available exclusively to Houston area students living closely to the federal poverty line. The school integrates a unique corporate work-study program that places students in Houston businesses and non-profits where they earn over 50 percent of the cost of their education. For more information about Cristo Rey Jesuit, please visit <http://www.cristoreyjesuit.org>

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