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YMCA 21ST CENTURY AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM WORKING WITH NASA ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PROJECT

The YMCA of the Fox Cities/Horizons Elementary School 21st Century Childhood Learning Center (CLC) After School Program is participating in a mission of atmospheric proportions. Students are taking part in an 8-week atmospheric investigation project collaborating with NASA and the GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment) Program.

This project is part of the 21st Century Community Learning program and involves collecting cloud and surface temperature measurements to better understand how clouds impact Earth's energy budget.

The Horizons Elementary School Site is just one of 13 CLC sites across the country selected to pilot this Atmospheric Science Investigation NASA GLOBE Project.

Students use instruments and their own senses to collect cloud and surface temperature data at sites near their school. They also do experiments using soil, gravel and sand, heating them up to see the difference between heating and cooling.

"Students who are registered for the YMCA 21st Century After School Program have the opportunity to participate," said Stephanie Johnson, 21st Century After School Program Coordinator at Horizons Elementary. "We have eleven 5thand 6th graders taking part. They are members of our NASA Science Club and chose to participate based on their interests."

Prior to beginning this project, Johnson and another Horizons CLC teacher Zach Starkey, attended a training workshop at NASA's Langley Research Center in Virginia and became teacher certified in GLOBE Protocol Training in clouds and surface temperature. "The data collected from our students is done using the proper protocol we learned at Langley, meaning it is certified and allowed to be submitted to the NASA GLOBE website where scientists will be using it in their research of the Earth's atmosphere."

"It's a wonderful learning opportunity for the kids and may even help some decide they might be interested in working in the science fields when they grow up," said Johnson. **"**We've had site visits from NASA representatives, opportunities to live video chat with scientists at NASA as well as students and teachers at the other participating sites across the country."

Upon completion of the 8-week project in February, students will work in groups to make videos documenting what they did and what they learned along the way. The videos will be submitted to NASA for publication and marketing purposes and shared with all students in the 21st Century After School Program.