



CONTACT:
Brian Cohen, Executive Director, Beam Center
718.855.7600
brian@beamcenter.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
10/20/2015

BROOKLYN TEEN STARGAZES WITH POTUS White House Astronomy Night Hosts Six Teens on October 19th

Six Brooklyn high school seniors, whose families come from Nigeria, Ecuador, China, Paraguay, Iraq and New York, came together under the same stars, on the same lawn of the same house. The White House. And one of those teens, Sofy Alvarez, stargazed with the President, teaching him how to view the moon through a telescope.

Chris Burgos, Yinghui Zou, Agatha Sofia (Sofy) Alvarez and Najm Qachi from Brooklyn International High School; Osarhuwense Otasowie from Midwood High School; and Kyra Ali from South Brooklyn Community High School have all participated in the White House Astronomy Night on October 19th.

These six students may originally hail from all parts of the globe, but they have at least one thing in common – a passion for stargazing and studying the universe, inspired in large part by a City Astronomy apprenticeship at Beam Center. It was there that they welded an 8-foot geodesic dome and coded a light show that made constellations appear inside this dome. They also learned basic astronomy lessons that could then be taught to younger students. These lessons used umbrellas and glow-in-the-dark paint to create constellations, solar ovens to heat up s'mores, and nesting boxes and origami to create models of the solar system.

This apprenticeship was made possible through ExpandedED Options, an ExpandedED Schools (formerly TASC) initiative that connects NYC high school students to field-based learning and real-world employment opportunities. After school and on weekends, students ages 16 and older apprentice with sports, cultural and science organizations that teach them how to lead activities and teach skills in their respective areas of interest. Students earn academic credit for opportunities that ultimately lead to paid summer jobs.

Research shows that field-based learning opportunities, such as those provided by ExpandedED Options, can help youth stay engaged in school. Through granting credit for apprenticeships, ExpandedED Schools is enhancing students' educational experiences by connecting course curricula to future college and career options.

And in this case, connecting high school seniors to scientists, engineers and visionaries, not to mention the President of the United States.



###

ExpandED Schools (formerly TASC) is a nonprofit dedicated to closing the learning gap by increasing access to enriched education experiences. In school, after school and during the summer, ExpandED Schools reimagines learning time, seeking to ensure that all kids have opportunities to discover their talents and develop their full potential.

Beam Center, a Brooklyn NY based nonprofit serving public schools in NYC, powers youth development and learning with creation and collaboration in and out of the classroom. Working with young people from second grade to high school, we collaborate with public school teachers, administrators and community partners to provide making and technology-integrated projects and workshops, youth mentorship, and professional development training for educators. Students learn welding, physical computing, carpentry, ceramics, textiles, video, programming and design while building their character, developing skills and preparing for a life of continual learning and meaningful work.