



Photo courtesy Bullock Museum

NASA Flight Engineer and Austin native Col. Tim Kopra fielded questions Feb. 16 from Austin elementary and middle school students from his post on the International Space Station.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MEDIA CONTACT

Elizabeth Page
(512) 936-4607

Elizabeth.Page@TheStoryOfTexas.com

Students at Bullock Museum speak with astronaut on the International Space Station

Live video stream connects schoolchildren with Austin astronaut

FEBRUARY 26, 2016 (AUSTIN, TX) — Earlier this month, the Bullock Texas State History Museum connected students from the Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter schools in Austin with a NASA astronaut currently living and working on the International Space Station. Orbiting nearly 250 miles above the Earth, Expedition 46 Flight Engineer and native Austinite Col. Tim Kopra spoke to students on Feb. 16 during their visit to the museum, answering questions about his experiences in space.

Second, fifth and sixth graders from KIPP Austin Obras Elementary and KIPP Austin Vista Middle School interviewed Col. Kopra during a live in-flight education downlink, asking questions relating to how it feels to be in space and how he communicates with the NASA team back on Earth. When asked what the hardest part about living in space is for him, Col. Kopra explained that keeping track of objects can be a real challenge.

"You're always planning where things are located and where you put them down, because they don't just sit on the table," he said. "They could be on the wall or on the ceiling or they could just float."

He went on to demonstrate to students how water acts in a zero-gravity environment, discussed life on the space station, and encouraged the students to set big goals for themselves.

-more-

Jomayra Jasso, a fifth-grade student at Obras Elementary, said she enjoyed learning about the life of an astronaut aboard the space station.

"Everything is different in space," Jasso said. "Heavy things become light, water turns into bubbles, and exercising is harder because you have to use bungees."

Members of the Col Kopra's family were also in attendance at the Earth-to-space video chat. Dawn Kopra, wife of Col. Kopra, shared with students the kind of training astronauts go through in preparation for a mission and what it's like to be present at a launch. She discussed the importance of the International Space Station for future space missions, saying that because of the research astronauts are conducting right now, humans will "...go back to the moon, and then we'll go to Mars, and we'll go to other places." A video of the education downlink can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4oWkfBa294>.

"It is a privilege for the Bullock Museum to be a part of this event," Director of Education Kate Betz said. "We're honored that Col. Kopra once again thought of the museum to host this unique live connection to the International Space Station for Texas students. Texas has had such a strong connection to NASA from its inception, and we were pleased to be able to host the next generation of Texans who will continue that legacy. We hope this event helps spark a greater interest in science education for the students who participated."

This is just one of the many ways the Bullock Museum encourages science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning. The museum displays artifacts from past NASA missions and presents the science and creativity that was required to bring these missions to successful completion. During "Science Thursday," held the second Thursday of each month, visitors to the museum can learn about science concepts through free, hands-on activities presented by experts. To learn more about Bullock Museum, visit TheStoryofTexas.com.

*****HIGH-RES MEDIA PHOTOS AVAILABLE AT <http://bit.ly/BullockNASA>**

#

About the Bullock Museum

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, located at 1800 N. Congress Ave. in downtown Austin, includes three floors of exhibitions, IMAX® and 4D special-effects theaters, a café and museum store. The Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives, and individuals to display original historical artifacts and host exhibitions that illuminate and celebrate Texas history and culture. For more, visit TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746.