

## Team of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Graders from Newington Win Junior Scientists Competition

Team Cooke's Novel Methods of Antibiotic Discovery in Space (NoMADS) is excited to announce the winning team of their Junior Scientists Competition! The Decomposers, a team of seven 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from Newington Public School in Newington, New Hampshire, chose their soil location based on its historical relevance to New Hampshire and to the United States.

At the beginning of the Fall 2021 semester, schools throughout New Hampshire were asked to submit their ideas for where Team Cooke should collect the soil that will be used in our experiment on the International Space Station. Along with a student-written explanation of why their soil's location was relevant and important, each student team was asked to send a sample of their soil to UNH Manchester for analysis.

The Decomposers' winning soil location was a site they chose in the Newington Town Forest, which is the oldest town forest in the United States! In addition to emphasizing its history, describing the site with extreme attention to detail, and making sure their site met all the safety requirements, The Decomposers' proposal also shined a light on their dedication to science and to our experiment. The team wrote, "We are very determined, because when we went to get our soil, we did it in the rain, wind, and forty-eight degrees. It was worth it."

This team of dedicated Junior Scientists will start working with Team Cooke before Winter Break, and then will continue to meet roughly twice a month for the remainder of the school year. In addition to learning about bacteria, antibiotics, antibiotic resistance, and space, our Junior Scientists partner team will visit UNH Manchester to perform real microbiology experiments in the lab, and will go on an outing with Team Cooke to collect the soil which will actually travel to space! The team will also host a control setup identical to our setup in space in their classroom. Team Cooke cannot wait to start working with this group of bright, motivated Junior Scientists!

Team Cooke NoMADS would also like to thank the other teams who submitted proposals to the Junior Scientists Competition. "The competition was close, and we were so grateful to have had the opportunity to inspire local middle school students to engage with science in a meaningful way, from choosing locations for soil based on their historical relevance and scientific analyses, to working together to write strong proposals," said Sydney Rollins, Team Cooke Co-Lead. The Space Bears of West Running Brook Middle School in Derry, NH, and the Barnard Hawks of Barnard School in South Hampton, NH have earned our runner-up prize. They will receive unique gifts from Team Cooke and will have the opportunity to work with the team to discover novel antibiotics produced by bacteria from their chosen soil!

Check out [Team Cooke's NoMADS website](#) and social media to stay up to date with our experiment, NoMADS Tribe events, and Junior Scientists meetings!

