

★ Launched from Baldwin

Astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli wows hometown students from space

BY OLIVIA WINSLOW

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NASA astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli, who is aboard the International Space Station, had answered 20 minutes of questions from students in the Baldwin school district who watched her Friday on video screens in their classrooms.

When the Q&A was over, Moghbeli exited the monitor screen with a midair over-the-body tumbling roll that lifted her upward and out of sight in the zero-gravity environment of space — to the “oohs” of delight from sixth-graders in a science class at Baldwin Middle School.

In a special downlink with NASA viewed across the Baldwin school district, where the astronaut was educated, a handful of students questioned Moghbeli, a lieutenant colonel and commander of the Space X Crew-7 that arrived on the space station in August for a six-month mission.

The questions ranged from how she sleeps in space — in a sleeping bag she tacks onto a wall — to what science experiments she’s working on, to whether she has done a spacewalk outside the space station — her first spacewalk is scheduled for next week.

Moghbeli had visited district

schools within the last year and told school officials they could apply to NASA to talk to the space station, said Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Anthony Mignella.

Mignella and schools Superintendent Shari Camhi went to Cape Canaveral in Florida to see Moghbeli and her crew launch to the space station, “a wonderful experience for us. When we were down there, we followed up with NASA representatives on our application,” Mignella said.

Seen at all schools

Erica Taylor, interim principal of the middle school, said instruction was “paused” for all students in the K-12, 4,500-student district, to watch the Q&A with Moghbeli.

Isabella Ramcharitar, 11, a sixth-grader, asked Moghbeli’s advice for someone who wants to be an astronaut.

Moghbeli responded, “What I would say is, whatever you choose to do, there’s not just the end goal . . . there’s the journey to get there. And you should never do something just for that goal. You should do things you’re passionate about. And as you do those things, because you’re passionate about them, you’ll inevitably do well, and that will take you to the next



KENDALL RODRIGUEZ

Baldwin Middle School students speak with astronaut Jasmin Moghbeli via a NASA downlink.

step . . . While you’re doing those things, help bring others with you.”

Isabella said later in an interview that she was inspired by Moghbeli to pursue her dream: “When I was like about the age of 4, I wanted to become an astronaut.”

And now to see Moghbeli from space, Isabella said, “It was just like my dream come true.”

Celeste Warner, 11, another sixth-grader, asked Moghbeli about the experiments she was working on in the space station.

Moghbeli said there were

more than 200 experiments in progress. “My personal favorites are the ones that actually use us as the subject. So our human bodies are being researched because, as you know, we’ve been living and working in space for nearly a quarter of a century now,” she said of astronauts.

‘On to Mars’

“But we would like to go further, onto the moon with our Artemis missions, then on to Mars. So understanding, when we start talking about living and working in space for three

years, how is our body responding to that?”

Moghbeli also told the students that she and the other astronauts, who generally work from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., have to exercise about 2 1/2 hours a day to keep their bodies strong in zero gravity.

She told them that keeping items secured was a constant necessity, so she kept Velcro and tape on her at all times.

Celeste said in an interview afterward, “I wonder how it feels,” floating about. She added that she’s “curious to find out what’s outside of Earth.”

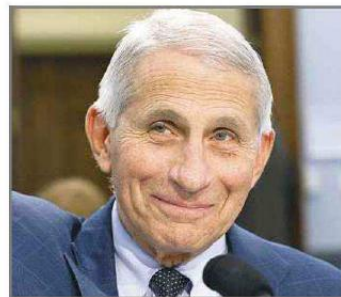
Fauci to address Hofstra commencement

BY JOHN VALENTI

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Dr. Anthony Fauci, who rose to prominence as he provided medical guidance to the nation during the COVID-19 pandemic, will deliver the midyear commencement address Dec. 21 at Hofstra University.

University officials noted that Fauci, who served as director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and the National Institutes of Health for almost 40 years, also will receive an honorary degree when he speaks before about 600 undergradu-



Dr. Anthony Fauci

ate, graduate and law students at the Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex in Hempstead.

“Hofstra University is delighted to welcome Dr. Fauci to give the commencement ad-

dress and receive an honorary degree,” Hofstra president Susan Poser said in a statement, adding: “His illustrious career in research and public service has had a global impact and will be an inspiration to the new graduates of Hofstra University.”

The Brooklyn-born Fauci, 82, joined the NIH in 1968 and in his role as director of the NIAID was a key adviser to seven U.S. presidents — from Ronald Reagan to Joe Biden — dealing with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and a host of other infectious diseases and immune-related illnesses. However, it was his televised news

conferences during the COVID-19 pandemic during the Trump administration that cast Fauci into the national and global spotlight.

Among his accolades, Fauci has received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded by President George W. Bush in 2008 for his work as one of the principal architects of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. He also has been awarded 62 honorary degrees from universities in the United States and abroad.

Earlier this week, it was announced Fauci would receive the 2024 Inamori Ethics Prize, awarded since 2008 by Case

Western Reserve University in Cleveland, for his tireless leadership roles — especially his work during the pandemic.

In announcing Fauci as speaker, chair of the Hofstra board of trustees Donald Schaffer said: “This commencement will be memorable. These students are among those whose schooling was interrupted by COVID-19, and Dr. Fauci’s address will undoubtedly bring their experience full circle. As a doctor and a medical scientist who has served with honor and distinction, he will help make this a special event for the graduates and their families.”