

Southlake's littlest patients have out-of-this-world encounter



By Brock Weir

Southlake's littlest cancer patients had an out-of-this world encounter on Thursday as they watched a live feed of astronauts on the International Space Station donning some of their very own handiwork.

It might have been the world's first zero-gravity fashion runway, but it was the debut of UNITY, the space suit pediatric oncology patients helped create.

According to Southlake, the Spacesuit Project was launched by Astronaut Nicole Stott and Ian Cion, director of the Arts in Medicine Program at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center to demonstrate the benefits of arts and science to adults and children fighting cancer.

Through the program, patients are challenged to hand-paint fabric patterns which are later stitched together into wearable replica space suits.

UNITY is the third such space suit, joining HOPE and COURAGE.

Kids gathered with real-life astronaut Dr. Dave Williams ? who just happens to be the retiring President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre ? for the morning of fun as they had a chance not only to see the space suit, but hear the astronauts on board the International Space Station answer questions that had been sent in by the students.

The kids also had the opportunity to paint swatches for EXPLORATION, which will be the fourth creation to come out of The Spacesuit Project.