



SCHOOL DISTRICT TWO
HARRISON
Character Through Diversity, Challenge & Accomplishment

NEWS RELEASE

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Thrive Home School Academy Students Receive Special Merit Award

COLORADO SPRINGS – **NASA**-funded “**Growing Beyond Earth**” (**GBE**) announced the winners on May 9 of their annual **Student Research Symposium**. A project by two students from **Thrive Home School Academy** placed in the top 10% of schools participating, receiving a special merit award for their use of national project data.

Amelia Anderson and **Mele Jones**, 11th graders at Thrive, participated in **GBE** to search for the perfect food plants to feed astronauts, in partnership with **NASA’s Veggie Project** and the **Fairchild Botanical Gardens** in **Florida**. For the past seven years, students from across the country have been providing **NASA** scientists with data on the best plant candidates to optimize growing conditions to maximize yield. This is Thrive’s fourth year to participate in the project under the direction of **Dara Gardner**, **Thrive science teacher**.

The students compiled their data after a semester-long research project using a variable LED light chamber, then presented to **NASA** scientists and botanists from University of Wisconsin in the virtual symposium, which included students from 60 schools from Canada, US, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad. Their project titled “**The Power of Blue: The Effects of Varying Blue Light on the Edible Mass of Crunchy Crimson Radishes**,” utilized data from three crops grown from October 2021 until March 2022. A total of 300 middle and high schools participated in the fall project, and 60 projects were selected to create original research for the spring project, culminating in the research symposium.

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