

St. Agnes students get national honors

STAFF REPORTS

Six fifth-grade students from St. Agnes School in Avon are in Maryland today to be honored as one of 21 "Stellar" Design Challenge teams chosen nationwide for Space Day 2006.

The students will be recognized at the Space Day National Celebration at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md.

They are Jesse Bennett, Rebecca Drexler, David Maginn, Graham Masi, Zachary Rizzolo and Nathan Taylor. They were accompanied by their families, St. Agnes principal Gerald Benjamin and Melissa Savino and Deirdre Phillips, technology and fifth-grade teachers respectively at the school. The St. Agnes team was the only winner from New York state.

Space Day, now in its 10th year, is an inquiry-based learning program that encourages fourth- to eighth-grade students to use math, science and research to create solutions to the challenges of space exploration.

"Living and Working on the Moon" was the theme of this year's contest.

The St. Agnes team's project, called TONY, was chosen as "Most Creative" in the national competition.

The team designed a mechanical device that astronauts could quickly and easily operate that would allow them to retrieve an object that was out of reach.

The design had to be able to extend at least 100 centimeters beyond its size when closed or collapsed. □