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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Prestigious Arthur C. Clark Award for Innovation in Education Given to Alaska's Challenger Learning Center in Kenai**

August 12, 2020, Challenger Learning Center of Alaska (CLCA), was honored to be the recipient of this year's 2020 Arthur C. Clarke Award for Innovation in Education. This award has been recognizing Challenger Learning Centers that have implemented a new, innovative program or project, that impacts student learning, supports teachers, and/or promotes creativity, for eight years. Arthur C. Clarke's legacy integrates science and technology with the arts and literature, with the vision to promote "future thinking" among the next generation.

This past July, Challenger Learning Center of Alaska partnered with the Ministry of Bermuda to administer a camp between Alaska and Bermuda middle school students. The original idea was to have a cultural STEM exchange camp with Bermudian students first traveling to the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska to participate with Alaskan students in a face to face program followed by Alaska students and Challenger Flight Directors traveling to Bermuda for the next segment of the program. However, as plans changed for everyone, the staff was able to adapt, continuing virtually. Hands-on, interactive projects have always been a central aspect of Alaska Challenger's curriculum. Therefore, to ensure all materials were available to the students, kits were provided and mailed. Educational Director, Suzanne Phillips shared that despite not being able to be together, students had no trouble collaborating virtually. Over the course of the week, students explored different scenarios and aspects of what it would mean to live on the Moon. They constructed and shared projects like biospheres, rover landers and space habitations. Flight Director Madi expressed how special it was to see the friendships grow between the Alaskan and Bermuda kids, as they often stayed after class to further collaborate. The partnership between Alaska Challenger and the Ministry of Bermuda started in 2019 with Alaska Challenger Educators traveling to Bermuda in Aug 2019 to deliver a STEM Academy to middle school students. Following the success of the program, discussions were started on how to grow the partnership and the concept of the cultural STEM exchange was developed.

The Arthur C. Clarke Award is sponsored and presented by Dr. Joseph N. Pelton, whom was a close friend of Arthur C. Clarke and a founding board member of the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation in 2017. During the Challenger Center Annual Conference, last Wednesday evening, Dr. Pelton recognized how important the student engagement and cultural exchange opportunity is that the Alaska meets Bermuda camp provides. Dr. Pelton also mentioned how exciting it was for him to see the virtual use of NASA's equipment from the Artemis program, the Orion capsule, and the Natural Buoyancy Lab, being demonstrated to the students throughout the camp. Dr. Pelton himself has played an enormous role in the space and STEM industries. Among some of his achievements, he is an author of over 50 books, has worked to advance the field of telecommunications technology, and has been the leader in several university research centers on space and satellite technology.

Marnie Olcott, CEO of the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska stated intentions of continuing this camp in future years, as well as expanding the program throughout the school year. Additionally, building upon the model, CLCA is offering Alaskan teachers and the ever-growing Homeschool population the opportunity to schedule Virtual STEM programs. To keep up to date on all current Challenger programming, in-center or virtual, visit www.akchallenger.org and Facebook @CLCAAlaska

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