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Challenged by Science Education/Erasing Dropouts

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CHALLENGED BY SCIENCE EDUCATION -- Jim Rowley, assistant professor of teacher education at the University of Dayton and one of the 100 national semi-finalists in NASA's "Teacher in Space" program, is the director of the newly opened Challenger Learning Center, located at Kiser Environmental Magnet School, one of Dayton's middle schools, 1401 Leo St. As many as 12,000 students from the Dayton Public Schools and seven surrounding school districts will take part every year in "computerized voyages," such as a simulated mission to Comet Halley in the year 2061 or a return to the moon to establish a lunar base.

The center's official dedication is 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26. Charles Resnik, brother of astronaut Judy Resnik, will attend. Judy Resnik was killed in the Challenger disaster. Rowley calls the program "one of the most exciting programs in math and science education in the country." There are currently four centers in the country, and Dayton's is one of only two associated with school districts.

Contact: Jim Rowley at (513) 229-3344 or 382-5047.

ERASING DROPOUTS -- In another joint project with the Dayton Public Schools, funded by a U.S Department of Education grant, the University of Dayton School of Education is involved in an innovative drop-out intervention program. Some 18 at-risk students at the junior high level attend classes -- not at a public school but full-time at UD, where they receive a healthy dose of skills and self-esteem from public school teachers and UD faculty.

"These are high-ability but low-achieving students who scored well on achievement tests and did well at the elementary level but failed as they entered the 7th grade," says Barbara Auer, project director and supervisor of secondary education with the Dayton Public Schools. "The program is intended to get them on track so that next year they'll go to high school without missing a beat and reverse the downward spiral."

The University Prep Program is in its third year, but this is the first year that the program has involved students at the junior high level.

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