

## Watkins Glen Science Fair Report

Date: March 25, 2011

The first annual Watkins Glen Science Fair held on Saturday March 19, 2011 at the Watkins Glen Elementary School Cafeterias was a success. Of the 94 students who registered, 72 of them participated in the event with exactly a 75% participation level in both the Middle School and the Elementary School.

We were able to get 30 evaluators consisting of doctors, professors, engineers, and scientists from our local communities to help interview the children. The local Watkins Glen/Montour Falls Lions' Club as well as the Society of Women Engineers' Twin Tiers Section recruited approximately half of these volunteers for us. Parents recruited the rest of them.

Local businesses that donated to this event included: Tops Supermarkets, Pizza Hut, and the Glen Theater.

The Elementary School Science Fair was non-competitive. Each student was interviewed by one judge and received a feedback form with information about what the evaluator enjoyed most about the project and what area might be an opportunity for improvement. The Middle School level was competitive with each project being evaluated by three separate judges. Judges were assigned based on areas of expertise as well as prior familiarity with the students (or lack thereof). In general, Middle School judges had no children in the competition, and family friends were assigned to different levels where they did not know the kids. One judge did request another student because he personally knew one of the kids he'd been assigned. The problem was quickly remedied. The student winners were:

7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Level:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Noah Wigmore – “Fishing Lines Take the Strength Test”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Halle Phillips – “Phases of the Moon”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Mikayla Elliott – “Specific Heat”
- 4<sup>th</sup> James Updyke – “Why Wetlands are Necessary During a Hurricane”
- 5<sup>th</sup> Lucas Wickham – “Which Bread Molds Fastest”

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> Grade Level

- 1<sup>st</sup> Phebe Wickham – “Carry on Shampoo”
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marah McCauley – “If You Give a Moose a Muffin...”
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Alex Gibson – “A Demonstration of the Wimshurst Machine”
- 4<sup>th</sup> Sara Gardner – “The Viscosity of Slime”
- 5<sup>th</sup> Courtney Irwin – “Why Do We Sweat”

The Corning Inc. Foundation provided \$2500 for this project. The funds were appropriated differently than originally planned as donations were provided by the community for items such

as evaluator provisions, but instead items such as a participant giveaway to increase the fair's visibility within the schools evolved. The Foundation's grant was used as follows:

Custom printed water bottles handed out to all participants at registration: \$378.00

Certificates of Participation and Award Ribbons: \$68.63

Barnes and Noble Gift Certificates for first, second, and third place award winners on both grade levels: \$240

Science and Discovery Educators for after-school help (2 sessions): \$164.88

30 Trifold Boards for students: \$75

The total amount used from the grant was \$926.51. We were able to save on expenses by using available materials, soliciting donations, scheduling educators during times when they were already in the area to save on mileage, and of course researching best prices. It is hoped to make the Watkins Glen Science Fair an annual event. The remaining funds will be applied to next year's science fair budget, which will be adjusted to more accurately represent expenditures as they were allocated this year.

Some of the changes currently planned for next year.

- The elementary students expressed disappointment that the projects on which they'd worked so hard all received "participant" level ribbon. The new thought will be to reward first, second, or third place prize ribbons based on how high the evaluation scores are for each project. For example, all scores above 75% would earn a first place ribbon, above 50% would earn a second place ribbon, etc. Some efforts truly earned more recognition than others.
- The timing for the schedule between arrival, public viewing, and evaluations will also be tweaked to better accommodate the children's tolerance for waiting before their evaluations.
- Custom printing orders will be placed earlier in the year to avoid unanticipated rush fees.
- A higher ratio of trifold boards to registered students will be purchased for student use as these items were still being requested after they were gone.
- As experience increases, more local businesses and organizations will be approached with specific donation or help requests to engage further community support.

These are a few photographs from the event. We are so proud of our students! They truly demonstrated initiative, creativity, and independent thinking as they put together their projects. There were reports that many of the students went home after the Science Fair and began plans for next year's projects.



Ellie could not wait to show off her Water pH project to her teacher.



Grace tested various coatings as rust inhibitors. Chocolate syrup was one of her more innovative variable choices.



Ana demonstrated how rocket height could be used as a means to measure gas volume produced in “fizzy reactions”.



Alex showed off principles of static electricity using his homemade Wimshurst machine.



Kindergartner Gabriel was one of the youngest participants, but as proud as any of the other kids with his project on pitch.



Noah placed first in the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade level with a new method for testing fishing line strength.



First grader Noah taught his teacher about his findings on paper airplane construction as it affects flight distance.



Phebe won first place for the 5th/6th grade level by demonstrating that dehydrated shampoo in the form of a solid could be a potential option to carry on airplanes.