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The Kids' Science Challenge Winners Announced

National science and engineering competition for third to six graders selects three winning entries
Entries Double in Year #2 of the Competition

ACCORD, NY – March 31, 2010 – Now in its second year, The Kid's Science Challenge is a nationwide annual competition for 3rd to 6th graders to submit experiments and problems for a select group of scientists and engineers to solve. The winning students, chosen from more than 1600 entries, will collaborate with scientists and engineers to see their ideas come alive. Funded by the National Science Foundation and created by Jim Metzner, award-winning producer of the Pulse of the Planet radio series, the Kids' Science Challenge encourages elementary school students to discover that science is **cool!**

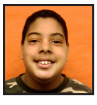
"In our first year, we had 770 entries, so we are very gratified that interest in this program is growing," stated Jim Metzner. "We received entries from 27 states! Once again, we feel extremely lucky to have a great group of scientists and engineers working in areas that immediately appealed to kids. We were impressed by the caliber of the entries and the scientists are really excited about collaborating with the winning students to work on the questions and challenges they've raised. The Kids' Science Challenge encourages team work and thinking outside the box. It demonstrates that science is not only cool – it matters," exclaimed Metzner.

Participating scientists and engineers for the Year #2 challenge, which launched October 1, 2009 include:
Bio-Inspired Designs – The winning student will work with Christopher Viney, Professor, Engineering, UC Merced, and engineers at the University of Maryland to explore a problem using the world of nature as a springboard for new ideas.
Detective Science – Students will work with forensic investigators Mo Lupia and David Tate, and Don Siegel - a professor of Earth Science at Syracuse University, to solve a real life mystery.
Imagining Sports on Mars – Working with Ashwin Vasavada, Brett Kennedy, Adam Steltzner, Kobie Boynkins, Suparna Mukherjee and their colleagues at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, CA, a budding engineer will come up with a game suitable for playing on the mysterious Red Planet.

AND THE WINNING STUDENTS ARE:

In Bio-Inspired Designs: Olivia Smith Donovan, 4th grader, Claymont Elementary School, Claymont, DE. Olivia took her inspiration from helicopter (maple tree) seeds which twirl around as they fall from the trees. She wondered if she could create a model big enough to be used to drop emergency parcels (and people) from great heights. She needs to figure out if people would get too nauseous to be dropped, spinning to earth and if this model could work for dropping packages. In addition to working with Christopher Viney at UC Merced to learn some of the principles of design and physics that could make her idea possible, she will also visit a lab at the University of Maryland where they are currently creating similar types of models, to develop her prototype.

In Detective Science: Caitlyn Taylor and Mason Wonka, "Team Marine Bustologists," 6th graders, Storm Grove Middle School, Vero Beach, FL. The "Marine Bustologists'' Caitlin and Mason are concerned about coral reefs in Florida being damaged by the sand and silt from dredging operations. Visiting with scientists at the Smithsonian Marine Station in Fort Pierce, they'll learn how to trace sediments. At Syracuse University in New York, they're working with professor Don Siegel and a team of environmental scientists to learn how to trace pollutants that are threatening the local water supply. They're also learning some cool techniques on how to conduct a forensic investigation.



In Sports on Mars: Tyrone Hutchinson II, 5th grader, Lyons Elementary School, Lyons, NY. Tyrone's idea for a game is called Magnetic Soil Ball. He incorporated the issues of gravity on Mars and the soil being magnetic to create a game where players use a magnetic ball, which will attract the magnetic soil as it is dribbled. The object is to shoot the ball into the basketball hoops, and as it drops, the magnetic soil will fall into a bucket below the hoop. The team that fills its bucket with soil first, wins. Players will wear golden astronaut suits and helmets for protection from UV rays. Tyrone will get to simulate his game at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory's Mars Yard in addition to creating a graphic visualization of the game.

The first 1,000 entrants to the competition have received free science activity kits. In addition to working with their scientists, winners' prizes will include a week at Space Camp, an exclusive VIP tour of the San Diego Zoo, a week at a Pali Adventures Camp, as well as receiving microscopes, Zoobs and other great science kits and toys from JAKKS Pacific, Infinitoy, Frey Scientific, World Book, Thames & Kosmos, Edmund Scientifics and Wham-O.

"The Kids' Science Challenge offers an innovative model that lets children pose research questions and suggest experiments to be conducted by real scientists and engineers," said Sandra Welch, program director in the Informal Science Education program at NSF. "Integrating traditional and new media -- including science radio broadcasts, podcasts, and blogs -- to engage kids in science challenges will help guide other educational efforts in the future."

The National Science Foundation has awarded a four-year grant to award-winning radio producer Jim Metzner (Pulse of the Planet, Sounds of Science) to produce the Kids' Science Challenge. It's Metzner's fifth NSF grant. "The exciting part of this project is just starting. Now the kids and scientists will get to work to make the kids' ideas come alive," explained Metzner.

The Kids Science Challenge website serves as a resource for kids and teachers, who will be able to track the progress of the winners, play educational science games, watch videos about the basic principals of science, and win prizes. Even though the competition winners have been announced, kids now have the opportunity to vote online for their favorite entries in the Kids' Choice Awards, which will be announced on June 1st, 2010. http://www.kidsciencechallenge.com/html/entries_gallery.php

The Kids' Science Challenge winners and scientists will also be featured on Pulse of the Planet's broadcasts and podcasts on www.pulseplanet.com. Pulse of the Planet is broadcast over 179 public and commercial radio stations around the world, reaching 416,000 listeners daily and broadcast outlets.

In April and May, the winning students have been meeting with scientists and engineers at their labs, workshops and in the field. The public can post comments and questions in response to new videos of their interaction, which will be online in May and June.

For further information about this year's and last year's winners, activities for children and educators, and to follow this year's winners, see www.kidsciencechallenge.com.

Note: Jim Metzner, the Kids' Science Challenge winners and the scientists will be available for interviews through abriskin@aol.com

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