

PRESS RELEASE

March 3, 2008

Thursday, March 13, 2008

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**Volunteer Judges Also Available for Comment – Quotes included in this release*

Muskegon Community College **Collegiate Hall**

4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Judges View Projects/Interview Students

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Young Scientists Meet the Public

Monday, March 17, 2008

Muskegon Community College

Stevenson Center - Room 1100

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

Students from four counties solve tough problems during 25th Science Challenge

Do Energy Drinks Affect Students' Ability to Concentrate?

Does Manual Dishwashing do a better job on Bacteria than a Dishwasher?

Does Color affect Memory?

Can Plants Resist Electricity?

These are just a few of over **70 problems** solved by **fifth through twelfth grade students** as part of the **25th Annual West Michigan Science Challenge (WMSC) at Muskegon Community College (MCC) Collegiate Hall on March 13, 2008**. The young scientists, who have worked individually or in teams of two, from schools in Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa and Newaygo Counties came up with a problem to solve and then spent the school year developing a science experiment to be presented and judged at the regional science fair. Many students have already placed in science fairs at their local school buildings before being allowed to compete at the regional level.

Over 50 volunteer judges, including physicians, dentists, biochemists, surgeons, educators, engineers, and business people, will apply an extensive list of criteria from **4:00 – 6:00 p.m.** as they evaluate each project's methodology, variables, data collection and analysis, conclusions and visual presentation. Four judges were assigned to each project in one of five categories: plant (non-animal) biology, human/animal biology, physical science, engineering/mathematics/computers, and behavioral/social science. Students also provide an oral presentation and answer questions posed by the judges.

Members of the public are invited to meet the young scientists and learn about their projects on **Thursday, March 13, 2008**, from **6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** at **MCC's Collegiate Hall**. The students are from Allendale Middle, Beach Elementary (Fruitport), Bunker Middle (Muskegon), Daisy Brook Elementary (Fremont), Ferry Elementary and Lakeshore Middle (Grand Haven), Hesperia Middle, Muskegon Catholic Middle, Muskegon Christian, New Era Christian, Newaygo High, Oakridge Middle, Shelby Middle, South Shore Christian (Holland), Spring Lake Intermediate, and Zeeland.

An **awards ceremony** will be held on **Monday, March 17, 2008**, from **6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** at **MCC's Stevenson Center in Room 1100** and will include the presentations of savings bonds,

ribbons and certificates for first, second, and third place and honorable mention within each category and grade level. Teachers of students who receive first place awards are given \$100 education grants. The following special awards for projects that best represent specific areas of interest will also be presented: Pi Chapter of the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority Award, MAISD Regional Math and Science Center (Plant Biology) Award, GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute Award, George Nielson Physical Science Award, Gerber Foundation Awards, EduSci, LLC Engineering Award, MCC Faculty Award in memory of Isabel Gabrielson, and two awards from the Muskegon Medical Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County.

Those fifth through eighth grade students placing in the top 10% of the West Michigan Science Challenge are given the opportunity to move on to the next level in a national science competition entitled the ***Society for Science and the Public Middle School Program***. Students in this group compete for over \$100,000 worth of scholarship monies and other prizes. Last year, Connor Ivens, a student at Newaygo County Public Schools, was chosen as one of 40 national finalists for his experiment involving the search for cocaine residue on U.S. currency. The Ivens family received an expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. where Connor took part in a series of team-based, interactive scientific challenges focused on the environment.

West Michigan Science Challenge engages students with creative problem solving in the areas of science, mathematics, and engineering. It is supported by donations from Brickley DeLong PLC, Community Shores Bank, EduSci LLC, Gary and Paula Doig, Gerber Foundation, Grand Valley State University – Annis Water Resources Institute, GreenDoor Education LLC, Haworth, Inc., MAISD Regional Mathematics & Science Center, Muskegon Community College, Muskegon Community College Faculty Association, Muskegon County Medical Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, Pi Chapter of the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority, Thomas O’Bryan, and John and Mary Ann Seelman.

West Michigan Science Challenge is one of three student programs coordinated by the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District Regional Mathematics and Science Center. The **Michigan Aerospace Challenge**, which provides elementary, middle, and high school students the opportunity to develop payloads and launch student built rockets, will take place on April 25 and 26, 2008. **Middle School Amusement Park Physics** will occur on May 14, 2008. All three programs require students to use their knowledge and skills to solve “real-world” problems.

Quotes from West Michigan Science Challenge Volunteer Judges:

- When asked why he has served as a judge for over fifteen years, **Timothy N. Trainor**, Muskegon Community College Instructor and Computer Information Systems Coordinator, said “I want to support science education in the community and I think Science Challenge represents interesting and fun things kids can do to explore their world.”
- According to **Laura Holwerda**, volunteer judge with Muskegon Public Schools-Muskegon, “WMSC allows students to investigate deeply a question that they choose. It also gives them the reward of accomplishing something great.” Holwerda added, “I enjoy interviewing the children to draw out their thinking and reasoning. A couple of years ago I judged a project about the best brand of super glue. The student had her controls and variables well established. Now I use her findings in my purchases of super glue.”
- **Laurie Schmitt**, volunteer judge and instructional services consultant for Ottawa Area Intermediate School District said, “The WMSC provides a real world audience for students. It seems to really bring out their desire to do their best work.” ###