

PRESS RELEASE

March 16, 2009

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Thursday, March 19, 2009

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
**Volunteer Judges Also Available for Comment*

Monday, March 23, 2009

Muskegon Community College
Stevenson Center - Room 1100
6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Awards Ceremony

Students from four counties solve tough problems during 26th Science Challenge

How does cell phone use affect driving in a video game simulation?

What is the effect of hockey stick flex on accuracy and speed of a shot?

What is the effect on the level of luminescent pollution in astronomical photography?

Do certain foods cause an increase in heart rate which could indicate an allergic reaction?

These are just a few of over **90 problems** solved by **5th through 12th grade students** as part of the **26th Annual West Michigan Science Challenge (WMSC)** at **Muskegon Community College (MCC) Collegiate Hall** on **March 19, 2009**. 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 55 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 seven 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 19, 2009**, from **6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** at **MCC's Collegiate Hall**. The students are from Beach Elementary School (Fruitport), Creekside Middle School (Zeeland), Ferry Elementary School (Grand Haven), Lakeshore Middle School (Grand Haven), Moon Elementary School (Muskegon), Muskegon Christian School, New Era Christian School, Newaygo High School, Oakview Elementary School (Muskegon), Ottawa County Home Schools, Ravenna High School, Rosy Mound Elementary School (Grand Haven), St. John's Lutheran School (Grand Haven), Shelby Middle School, Spring Lake Intermediate School, Zeeland East High School, and Zeeland West High School.

An **awards ceremony** will be held on **Monday, March 23, 2009**, 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, Spring Meadow Nursery, Inc.- Proven Winners Plant Biology Award, GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute Award, George Nielson Physical Science Award, Gerber Foundation High School Awards, EduSci, LLC Engineering Award, and two awards from the Muskegon Medical Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County.

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 PC, Nina Brown-George Nielson Award, Gary and Paula Doig, GreenDoor Education LLC, Howmet Castings/Alcoa Corporation, Thomas W. O’Bryan, Pi Chapter of the Alpha Delta Kappa Sorority, and John and Mary Ann Seelman, Shape Corporation, Pliant Plastics Corporation, Spring Meadow Nursery, Integrity Business Solutions, Community Shores Bank, and Hooker, DeJong, Inc.

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 24 and 25, 2009. **Middle School Amusement Park Physics** for middle school students will occur on May 20, 2009. All three programs require students to use their knowledge and skills to solve “real-world” problems.

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