

PRESS RELEASE

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Shelby students succeed at regional science fair— 2 qualify for national competition

Participating in the **25th Annual West Michigan Science Challenge (WMSC)** paid off for Shelby Middle School students Jennifer Barrett, Madeline Field, and Emily Schuchardt. All three earned first place ribbons in the March 13, 2008, regional science fair which included students from Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa, and Newaygo counties. Of the 81 total students, 13 received first place ribbons during the awards ceremony, and their teachers received \$100 grants to be used for science learning in their classrooms. Shelby Teacher Lori Green earned three \$100 grants due to her students' performance.

Shelby Middle School student Thomas Driscoll was also honored with the George Nielson Physical Science Award. This award is given to a physical science project in which the student uses creative problem solving, and demonstrates enthusiasm for science and strong communication skills. Jennifer Barrett received a special award from the Muskegon County Medical Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County as well. This award is given for creative problem solving utilized in a project that pertains to any medical field.

A total of 15 students from Shelby Middle School participated in WMSC along with 5th through 12th grade students 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, and Spring Lake Intermediate.

The projects were judged by over 50 volunteers, including physicians, dentists, biochemists, surgeons, educators, engineers, and business people. They evaluated each project's methodology, variables, data collection and analysis, conclusions, visual and oral presentation.

Because the fair is affiliated with the **Society for Science & the Public (SSP)** Middle School Program, those 5th through 8th grade students who placed first and placed in the top 10% of WMSC winners will also receive an invitation to enter the SSP national competition. Barrett and Field both qualified. To continue at this level, each must write essays based on their science fair project and science fair experiences. By doing so they could be named one of 300 national semifinalists and ultimately one of 30 finalists. The finalists win all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., to compete for scholarships, trips, and other awards. 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. His time in Washington, D.C. was spent participating in a series of team-based, interactive scientific challenges focused on the environment.

West Michigan Science Challenge is supported by donations from Brickley DeLong PLC, Community Shores Bank, Gary and Paula Doig, GENTEX Corporation, 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, Nina Brown, 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.

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