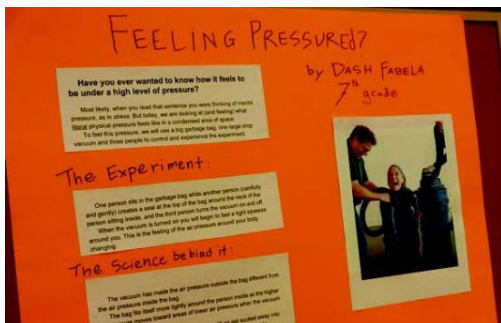


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Students' creativity shines at Stanley's STEAM Expo

Submitted by Catherine Kauder



One of the more popular exhibits was the air pressure machine. Even Assistant Principal Brian Mangold got into the spirit of things. Photos provided

The Arts and Science community came together for one exciting night recently as Stanley Middle School hosted LPIE's STEAM. Expo.

STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, art and math and this well-attended exhibition saw over 150 Stanley students showcase their creativity in all of these disciplines.

In the past, the event was traditionally a Science Fair held every two years. But this time around, LPIE expanded the categories to include art, robotics, home economics, wood shop and computers along with science and math. Music was also in the air as Acalanes High School jazz musicians performed in the courtyard and 40 Stanley musicians participated in a solo ensemble concert in the music room.

"It's not your grandpa's Science Fair," said Stanley Principal David Schrag.

Stanley's multipurpose room and gym were filled with interactive exhibits and demonstrations from students and community exhibitors such as Contra Costa HazMat, BMW Motorcycles, the Lindsey Wildlife Museum, Contra Costa Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team, East Bay Municipal Utility District and many more.

Visitors to the expo could see anything from student-drawn comics and other art work, crochet samples, BattleBots, computer programs and countless other experiments, many of which students did during their free time outside of school.

One of the more popular exhibits was seventh-grader Dash Fabela's air pressure experiment. Participants would sit inside a plastic garbage bag while another person vacuumed all of the air out of the bag, so that the person in the bag could feel the difference in air pressure - and get a tight squeeze in the process. A long line of students waited patiently for their turn to get "under pressure" - and even Schrag and Assistant Principal Brian Mangold gave it a try.

Eighth-grader Roman Mirov had a table full of mini-computer components that he built himself at home. Mirov said he learned more about how to construct the devices by reading manuals and watching tutorials on YouTube.

"Anybody can learn what they're interested in online or in books," he explained.

Stanley computer teacher Brian Connolly's students displayed their interactive projects on the stage of the multi-purpose room. Eighth-graders Ellie Gainey, Nuala Maher, Jules Auston and Giovanna Fry showed their motorized replica of Disney's spinning tea cups ride, which was partially produced on a 3-D printer and used motors to move the spinning parts.

Students from home economics did cooking and sewing demonstrations, while art students gave a "how-to" on using the pottery wheel. Wood tech, robotics, math and computer students also showed off their skills during the evening, while a taco truck fed hungry expo goers out in the school's courtyard.

Meanwhile, community exhibitors like Napa-based GIGAmacro showed off the latest technology in high-resolution cameras and software.

"The exhibitors were engaged with the students and were open to lots of questions," said STEAM Expo Co-Chair Matt Fabela. "There was great interaction was going on during the event between students, parents, visitors and the exhibitors."

Mangold agreed, noting that it was good for students to see the applications that STEAM subjects have in the real world.

"It's amazing all of the resources in this community, and great to have them here to inspire our youth and be inspired by them," Mangold said.



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