

## Science Night proves fun, educational West Jeff students enjoy variety of science-related activities

By Deb Hurley Brobst

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What could be more fun than shooting off bottle rockets, sinking foil boats with marbles, making and flying paper airplanes, or looking through a microscope to watch brine shrimp wiggle?

These were just a few of the activities at the second annual Science Night at West Jefferson Middle School on Sept. 14. Students of all ages went from table to table to try their hands at scientific experiments, plus they could make brain hats — pink paper hats marked with the areas of the brain.

Science teachers Kathy Fuchigami and Justin Little are behind the Science Night, which Fuchigami said lets the kids have fun with science.

“I’ve been teaching for many years,” Fuchigami said, “and I’ve seen things come and go in the curriculum. Sometimes the fun of science has been replaced with paper-and-pencil activities. [At Science Night] they get to do the activities that everybody loves all in one night.”

Fuchigami was pleased that the University of Colorado Biology Club and the Boy Scouts, along with countless teacher and parent volunteers, made the night possible.

Sixth-grader Grant Hoskinson was busy measuring the amount of sugar in soft drinks and juices at one table. He measured out the 43 grams of sugar that can be found in a can of root beer.

“So far it’s interesting,” Grant said of Science Night, adding that he knew there was a lot of sugar in soft drinks, but he didn’t realize how big a gram was.

Mom Heidi Crawford said Science Night was the perfect activity for Grant because he loves science.

Sixth-grader Jack Rueschhoff folded a paper airplane and flew it in front of the school. He said the event was fun.

Volunteer Courtney Carlson, who has a sixth-grader at WJMS, was cutting out brains — figuratively, not literally. Participants at the brain-hat table cut out the right and left hemispheres of the brain, all labeled with the appropriate sections and their functions.

“This is really important stuff that kids should be learning about in school,” Carlson said as she taped the two sides of the brain together.



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From left, sixth-graders Brooklyn Wolanske, Roslyn Baker and Natalie Minarretta make brain hats. The hats show parts of the brain.

Sixth-graders Brooklyn Wolanske, Roslyn Baker and Natalie Pinarretta joined her at the table. Natalie said Science Night had been pretty interesting, and seeing the parts of the brain on the hats was a good learning experience.

Outside, while some checked out the moon through telescopes, others made rockets by mixing Mentos candy with cola, and others were using tire pumps to put air into large soda bottles so they went airborne.

Fourth-grader Avrie Bunchman waited her turn to send a soda bottle into the air. She said she liked cutting the cow's eyeball, though she said she was grossed out just a bit.

Principal Becky Brown wandered through the science experiments, helping out and talking with kids about what they were learning.

"This event brings the community [to the school]," Brown said. "Let's get kids to fall in love with science."

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