

CANYON COURIER

Science rules

WJMS hosts interactive Science Night for kids, community

By Corinne Westeman

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Did you know that putting glow sticks in hot water will make them shine brighter, while putting them in colder water will help them last longer?

If you don't, Parker Liebaert, an eighth-grader at West Jeff Middle School, can tell you all about it.

Parker spent last Wednesday night teaching kids and adults alike about the chemical reactions within glow sticks as part of the school's third annual Science Night. An estimated 200 kids and parents attended for a night of dissecting cow eyeballs, looking through microscopes, expanding or shrinking marshmallows in a vacuum, making paper airplanes and chromatography painting, among others.

This year, the 15 or so stations seemed to be more interactive than they were last year, Parker said. As a helper, she enjoyed seeing the kids' enthusiasm for learning science.

"It's fun to play with it all outside of the classroom," she said of the different stations. "(Science Night) is a cool way to experience new facts and learn."

Another important aspect of the event, WJMS science teacher Justin Little explained, is hosting the elementary school students and getting them acquainted with not only science but the school. It's also crucial to bring the community into the learning process, he added.

Parent Dave Hale, who brought his two sons to the event, noted that all the stations were hands-on, which is key. He thought the station where kids could pour out the amount of sugar in soft drinks was especially good for dietary awareness.



Chancey Bush

A finger is placed on the Plasma Sphere creating colorful beams of light from the electrode during Science Night at West Jeff Middle School on Sept. 27.



Chancey Bush

Marshall Kitchner, 6, views a slide containing blood worms.

Alex Hale, a sixth-grader at West Jeff, and his younger brother were enjoying the variety of activities. His favorite activities were putting chips of dry ice in balloons and driving the Spheros.

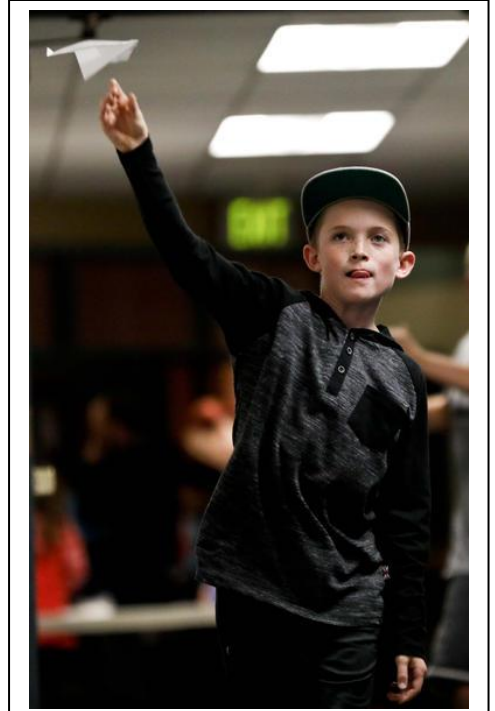
He appreciated the opportunity to show his dad and younger brother his school and the various stations. Alex emphasized that Science Night is for everyone, not just students, and that parents, grandparents and anyone are welcome to attend.

Cousins Jade Evans, 9, and Sunny Justice, 7, heard about the event from Sunny's sister, a student at WJMS. The two were enjoying themselves at the animal pelt station, with Jade enthusiastically saying she liked playing with the dry ice, while Sunny's favorite had been the eyeball dissection.

Jade's mom, Becky Evans, explained that the girls were definitely getting ideas for future science fairs.

Evans, who holds a degree in science, also appreciated the event both as a fan of science and as a mom.

"It's fun, good family time," she said. "It gets them away from the TV and having a hands-on learning experience."



Chancey Bush

Reid Taylor, a sixth-grader, tests out the paper airplane he made during Science Night at West Jefferson Middle School in Conifer on Sept. 27.