

NSYCC Meets the Next Generation of Scientists

By Catherine Rawlins, NSYCC Chair-Elect

In the Fall of 2015, the NSYCC received a grant from the ACS Committee on Community Activities to host an outreach event. The goal was to give back to the community in some way to spread science to a wider audience and engage the future generation of scientists. We had two successful endeavors in 2015 and it has inspired us to seek out more events like this in the future. Thanks to our Career Chair, Ray Borg, we collaborated with graduate student Jerry Gilligan who has fostered connections with local schools, especially East Boston High School. He works closely with Dr. Kristen Cacciatore's Advanced Placement Chemistry class to bring a more diverse and interactive perspective to the science curriculum. The three of us spent an afternoon in November performing demonstrations of chemistry kits from Flinn Scientific such as "The Disappearing Rainbow" and "Amorphous Monster Foam." These same kits will be used by the students for their annual Science Day where they will conduct and explain the experiments in front of the parents and teachers. We hope to continue this connection with Jerry and East Boston High School and visit again!

For our main outreach event of the year, we hosted an event titled "The Magic of Science" at the Brighton Public Library on December 5th 2015 with over 50 children in attendance. Valerie Ivancic, NSYCC Webmaster, designed four experiments for the participants that were simple and safe for ages 12 and under. Each table was decorated like the four Hogwarts houses: Gryffindor, Ravenclaw, Hufflepuff, and Slytherin. At the Gryffindor table Matt Rosiensi and Alicia Lee (Clark University) showed the kids how to make their own silly putty using cornstarch, Elmer's glue, Borax, and food coloring dye.



Ray Borg (right) helps Jerry Gilligan (left) with a demonstration

Photo credit - Catie Rawlins

Meanwhile at the Slytherin table Felicia Lucci (NSYCC Chair) had set up a nano-science demonstration with toy fuel cell cars and a scanning tunneling microscope that showed students atoms. Valerie was at the Hufflepuff table showing the iodine clock reaction using apples for the Vitamin C and the potatoes as starch. Last but not least the Ravenclaw table had a milk dispersion experiment with food coloring dye and dish soap demonstrated by Sarah Lach and Astha Bilimoria (Clark University). Each child was provided their own pair of glasses and glove to be “safe like a real scientist”. There was also arts and crafts table where they could paint their own magic wands and decorate their safety glasses. It was great to see the children show so much enthusiasm with the different experiments! Several kids said they want to be scientists someday; to quote one “I want to be an Ologist and study everything that ends in -ology!” Approximately six different K-8 schools were represented, many from Winship Elementary which is a block away from the library. We received great feedback from parents and children alike and we already looking to plan another one for 2016!



Alicia Lee and Matt Rosiensi at the Gryffindor table



Sarah Lach at the Ravenclaw table



Valarie Ivancic at the Hufflepuff table



Felicia Lucci at the Slytherin table

Photo credit: Astha Bilimoria