

PRESS RELEASE FROM
PRESIDING OFFICER DUWAYNE GREGORY



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Suffolk County Legislature Congratulates BNL Science Fair Winners



HAUPPAUGE, N.Y – The Suffolk County Legislature last week recognized the winners of Brookhaven National Laboratory’s 2015 Elementary School Science Fair. [Over 100 Suffolk County schools](#) participate each year, with entrants ranging in age from kindergarten through sixth grade.

“I am honored to congratulate these promising young scientists,” said Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory. “The key to solving some of our greatest challenges lies in science, and I commend Brookhaven National Laboratory for making this investment both in these young people and in our collective future.”

Spencer Asofsky, who attends Bay Shore Middle School, was the sixth grade winner. Asofsky, who said he had always been a “picky eater,” wondered whether color affected a person’s perspective on taste. He constructed his experiment by dyeing lemon-lime seltzer with different

food colorings, then asking a sample of 20 people to describe the flavor tasted. All 20 subjects recorded that the yellow beverage tasted like lemon and green tasted like lime, and 14 recorded that red tasted like cherry and purple tasted like grape. Also of note was that 80 percent of the subjects stated that yellow was their favorite beverage because they believed it tasted like lemon.

“We’re really thrilled with Spencer’s performance, creativity and knowledge of the scientific method,” said Donna Bettinelli, the Director of Science at Bay Shore Schools. She accompanied Asofsky and his family to the presentation of his proclamation at the Legislature.

Asofsky is the son of Steven and Mary Asofsky and grandson of Madeleine and Paul Boghosian.

Other winners of the Brookhaven National Laboratory Science Fair were as follows:

Kindergarten: Justyn Harrison of Middle Island, who attends Charles E. Walters Elementary School. He is the son of Greg and Kymara Harrison. His project, “Chelsea’s Favorite Treat,” examined whether dogs had a preference in treats. He found that his dog, Chelsea, had a consistent preference for cheese-wrapped snacks.

First grade: Jennifer Tiskowitz of Rocky Point, who attends Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School. She is the daughter of Terri Dietz and Jon Tiskowitz. Her project, “Keep My Craft Colorful,” tested whether household products could be used to prevent construction paper from fading. Of the substances she tested, Pledge furniture polish was the most effective at preserving color.

Second grade: Mark Burns, Jr. of Baiting Hollow, who attends Riley Avenue Elementary School. He is the son of Mark Burns, Sr. and Danielle Burns. His project, “Snow Problem,” sought to find an environmentally-friendly alternative to salt for use in melting ice. Of the substances he tested, pickle brine was the best alternative.

Third grade: Kelly Bossert of Fort Salonga, who attends Fort Salonga Elementary School. She is the daughter of Carolyn and Marc Bossert. Her project, “Don’t Let It Burn,” tested whether certain trees and shrubs spread fire more quickly than others. She found that while evergreens ignite quickly, deciduous plants take longer to ignite and can be extinguished more quickly.

Fourth grade: Ella Causin of Oakdale, who attends Idle Hour Elementary School. She is the daughter of Richard and Jennifer Causin. Her project, “Slippery Sidewalks,” tested the efficacy of various substances at melting ice. Of the substances she tested, she found rock salt melted ice the most quickly.

Fifth grade: Jack Soldano of Miller Place, who attends Laddie A. Decker Sound Beach School. He is son of Cristin and Steven Soldano. His project, “Compost Conundrum,” examined whether composting significantly affected the growth of plants. Although his findings did not make a strong case for the use of compost to stimulate plant growth, he stumbled across several “unexpected discoveries,” including the “resurrection” of a cucumber plant from cucumber seeds in compost.

Photo: Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory congratulates Justyn Harrison, the kindergarten winner of Brookhaven National Lab’s Science Fair, as BNL’s Scott Bronson, manager of K-12 programs, looks on.

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