

The Student Bio Expo Inspires

By Troy Chapman

The room was buzzing with energy as the 2014 Student Bio Expo began on May 22nd at 7:30 AM at Shoreline Community College. The Expo is an opportunity for high school students to creatively demonstrate their understanding of biotechnology, biomedicine and bioethics topics. As buses arrived, students quickly rushed to their demonstration table, ran electric chords, and erected art displays and poster boards. Students helped one another set up audio equipment and a general camaraderie was evident. A room filled with bare tables moments ago, was soon brimming with 265 projects demonstrating creativity and energy. 2-D and 3-D models, art, computer displays, music, and molecular models grabbed one's eye, and the Student Bio Expo officially began. What followed the frantic morning rush can only be described as sustained energy, passion, excitement.

After Damon May, Co-Director at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, presented on [Project Violet](#), the day's judging rounds began. Students eagerly stood by their projects excitedly anticipating an opportunity to share their work. NWABR staff, board members, and volunteers as well as mentors and official judges strolled through the rows of student projects and were met with beaming eyes. The sounds of constant dialogue and laughter reverberated off the glass walls of the auditorium. As the interactions continued, one thing became clear: the Bio Expo is an amazing opportunity to engage students in the process of research and scientific discovery. Adults came up to NWABR staff exclaiming, "I wish I had an opportunity like this when I was young." Students beamed.

The day was wrapped up with the three musical performances in Shoreline's theater, and the awards ceremony began. As student's names were called their peers shouted and cheered! Teachers grinned, laughed, and tried to contain their pride. Each student was met with similarly enthusiastic applause, and the character of our young leaders was on full display. The People's Choice Award, an award voted on by peers and the public, was given to Lara Tkachenko from Ballard High School for her Art project on Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease. NWABR's Inspiration Award was given to three students who demonstrated an ability to overcome great odds to complete their project. It meant that they or a loved one had fought a disease or risen above a disability. We were all proud of their courage. The school who exemplified the spirit of the Expo, Juanita High School, was awarded the Judge's Cup of Excellence for their sustained commitment to team teaching to improve the educational experience of their students in science and global health.

NWABR is truly honored to host this incredible student event. We strive to make science accessible to future generations, and the Bio Expo captivates. We are thankful for the hours that mentors spent with students, the time given by judges, volunteers, teachers, and students for making the Expo an amazing experience. We are excited to see the Expo students grow, and their excitement for learning should inspire us all. When reflecting on this year's Expo we can say NWABR made a difference, and we know it takes a community. As one student remarked, "Life is about finding your path, and the Bio Expo is just one of those events that can guide you!"

Check out photos from the Expo by visiting our Facebook page!

