

Science Day

Exploring to Learn

by Briana Tellez



Seeing how high they can go, eighth graders Brenden Bergmeyer & Myles Vyhnaelek learn the importance of a steady hand.



Taking a peek, kindergarten Marilyn Hanson curiously looks at many different colors in the kaleidoscope.



Admiring their work, fourth grader Grayden Easley, seventh graders Harrison Vyhnaelek & Boone Smith, & fourth grader Weston Brandt enjoy building a tower.

Hair sticking up, electricity zapping in a clear ball, large games of Jenga and Battleship, and students playing interesting musical instruments were just a few of the science-based activities showcased in the gyms of Dorchester.

The school hosted a special Science Day in conjunction with the elementary Grandparents Day that's held annually. This year instead of doing activities in individual classrooms, Edgerton Explorit Center from Aurora made it a one-of-a kind celebration with an unending variety of activities that filled two gym floors. It was a time of building a unique opportunity for students from kindergarten to sixth grade to bond over the wonders with their grandparents.

For the younger students, lunch was served on tables off to the side of the gym before the science activities started.

"I really liked eating with my grandparents," second grader Breckin Barlow said. "It really made the day special."

After they were finished, children and their grandparents were welcomed into the gyms to explore and entertain themselves together.

They worked side by side connecting building blocks together, looking at insects under magnifying glasses, and trying out strength grip testers. Unforgettable laughter and cheerfulness filled the gyms. Grandparents enjoyed sharing stories of what they learned back in school and children loved talking about what they started learning in science class.

"I liked playing with the airzooka," fourth grader Chloe Schweitzer said. "It was unbelievable how much air it put out. It kind of messed up my hair."

High school and junior high students were just as thrilled to experience something different. People

gathered around stations experiencing the effects of static electricity and playing intense games such as Jenga and Battleship. One round of Jenga even lasted almost 30 minutes between two students, eighth grader Brennaly Vasquez and freshman Kaitlyn Bolton.

"I always liked playing Battleship, but it's been a while," Bolton said. "It was fun to play again on a larger scaled version of the game."

The oversized Jenga game was quite the hit for students as they tried to keep it standing while removing wooden blocks.

"My favorite part was playing Jenga because we were so concentrated," freshman Brennaly Vasquez said. "I hope they come again next year."

Teachers enjoyed watching students collaborate and work together to solve science activities. Teachers of science used the time to explain how some of the science apparatuses worked.

"I liked having science day because the students seemed to really like it," Chris Nelson, high school science teacher, said. "Some of the students even gained interest in a field or two."

Science day was an interactive day for all ages; even teachers explored.

"They had interesting instruments that used science to explain how they made sound," music teacher Steve Jirsa said. "I hung out around the instruments and a lot of students learned to play a few different nontypical instruments. It was a good learning activity."

The electricity shock section was by far the students' favorite activity. It seemed that every student wanted to test it out one by one. They also found it fun to see how electricity traveled while holding hands with

Making a house, second grader Ester Loarca spends her time to learning on how to keep her build steady.



Controlling the electricity, junior Lily Lehr stares at the clear ball in awe while learning more about science.

their friends.

"It was fun trying to shock each other," seventh grader Shane Dawes said. "I was a little nervous at first, but it didn't really hurt."

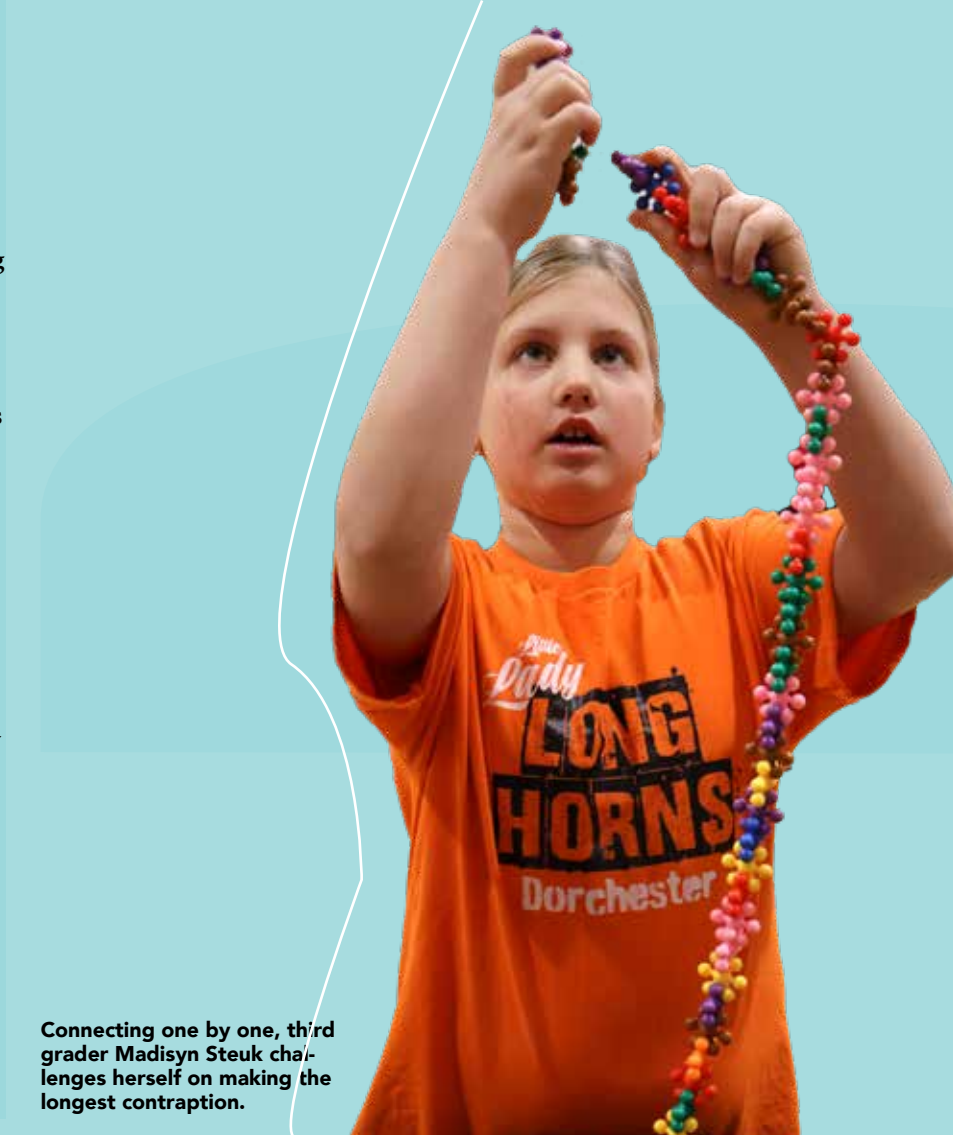
Grandparents circled around the children entertained by the electric connections.

"This was the most surprising thing they brought," seventh grader Embry Brant said. "It was fun when everyone's hair stuck up from the electricity."

Others enjoyed playing with games from other countries.

"I tried to get the wooden ball to land on the cup part of the Japanese toy by swinging the ball on a string. English teacher Sandy Severance, who had the same toy because she had a Japanese roommate in college, came by and told me to not swing it but to try to get under the ball with the cup, and I was able to get it," senior Micaela Loarca said.

Science day on Grandparents Day gave everyone, young and old, a chance to learn something new and a wonderful time to spend time around loved ones. It was a day of learning experiences and a time to explore and learn at the same time. Students intermingled with teachers and family members. Overall, it was a touching reminder that learning is a lifelong adventure best appreciated together.



Connecting one by one, third grader Madisyn Steuk challenges herself on making the longest contraption.

Designed by Rosie Lopez Perez