

Lots to Do at Recent Science Fair

Submitted by Theresa Maloney



Photo provided

Local students Ryan Vaughn, Matt Sexton and OT Koehl explored the world of science at the St. Perpetua School Science Fair Jan. 31. They conducted seven science experiments, met with former NASA Scientist Margaret Race, participated in hands-on activities and demonstrations like the space-themed activities presented by Chabot-to-Go from the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oak-

land, and watched videos on life in space. Connecting kids with science in "real life" through introductions to NASA and Chabot is central to forming their bond with science, according to St. Perpetua science teacher Jessica Benfield. Ms. Benfield also organized the junior high science exhibit, which featured all projects including the nine winners chosen from sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

App: Google Maps by Google Inc.
For: All smartphones
Price: Free



The Google Maps app was available for all smartphone users until a few months ago when Apple decided to drop it in favor of its own mapping app. iPhone owners were not at all pleased, so Apple went back to including Google Maps in January 2013. In the first 48 hours after it was again available, it was downloaded more than 10 million times by iPhone users! This is not surprising, considering how many useful features are found on Google Maps. For starters, most users especially like

the voice-guided navigation. Simply type in where you want to go and the app will map out a driving route. It will then talk you through each and every turn until you reach your destination. This voice-guided navigation can also be used for walking directions, or traveling by bus, subway, or train. Google Maps also gives you the ability to do a local search to find businesses, restaurants, bars, tourist attractions, sightseeing venues, and shops. The address is supplied, as well as directions for getting to your

destination. You can access Zagat scores for reliable ratings on all the places found by the search, as well as reviews by other Google Maps users. And, of course, Google Maps displays incredibly accurate maps that are easy to use, including satellite view and street view. This app is absolutely a must-have app for your smartphone.

Alex Pawlakos is the Economic Reporter on the #1 global teen radio show, Express Yourself!

TEEN SCENE

Aiding a Generation

By Konnie Guo

The saying "ignorance is bliss" is inaccurate. Though it may be nice to relax or simply sweep challenging subjects under the proverbial rug, there are some issues that cannot be ignored. Elder abuse is a very real problem in the United States affecting more than 2.1 million Americans each year, not including undocumented cases, according to the American Psychological Association. If left without sufficient care, there is the possibility for self-harm or even danger for others.

What is elder abuse? The National Center on Elder Abuse defines it as "a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult." It includes emotional and physical abuse, exploitation, neglect, or abandonment.

How can we know if a vulnerable adult is being abused in any way? If a senior is anxious and easily upset, has strange injuries, or is behaving unusually, these are signals to which we need to pay attention. Anyone can identify these suspicious signs and notify the proper authorities. Marina Box, a student at Miramonte High, says, "Everyone should be alert to make sure abuse isn't happening. The elderly definitely should not be forced to do something against their will."

Abuse is not limited to only physical or emotional harm. Lamorinda elders have been subjected to abuse through financial exploitation, one of the most difficult types to prevent. Known as "Granny Scams," these scams consist of a telephone call to an unknowing senior, with the caller under the guise of a relative in trouble. The scammer will indicate that a grandchild has had an accident or is in the hospital in foreign country and needs help. Often, the perpetrator pretends to be the grandchild, asking for money to be wired to a distant bank account with a promise not "to tell mom or dad." With this, Lamorinda seniors have been cheated out of thousands of dollars.

Teens can assist in stopping abuse through awareness and communication. People need to know the dangers and horrors that the elderly face. Talk to the elders in your family and let them know that you are available to help them in any way. Make sure they know about the "Granny Scams" and advise them never to take these phone calls. Create a secret pass code that you would use if you are in trouble and need their help. Discuss elder abuse with peers to brainstorm ways to halt it.

Sophomore Avan Chu suggests, "We could use all kinds of methods—Facebook, Twitter, and more—to gain recognition of this issue." In today's era of social media, teens can spread elder abuse awareness with the click of a button. While it might not seem like much, just working to spread the word can make a huge difference. So next time, when you come across an issue worth mentioning, don't forget to like, share, or retweet it. It's as simple as that!

Konnie Guo is currently a sophomore at Miramonte High School in Orinda. She is an avid reader, and during her spare time, enjoys playing the piano and doing volunteer work.



Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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