

Local Students Take Top Honors at State Science Fair! April 10, 2012

Written by Rachel Chamberlain
Tuesday, 10 April 2012 14:44

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580 students from 56 schools around Iowa traveled to Iowa State University on March 30th-31st for the Iowa State Science and Technology Fair. Of those, 11 students from **Rivermont Collegiate**, an independent school in Bettendorf, Iowa, won an impressive 27 awards and scholarships.

For the third time in her high school career, top honors went to Rivermont senior, Pavane Gorrepati, winner of the prestigious **Grand Championship** award for her project on the impact different genes have on the nutritional characteristics of rice. Pavane will represent the State of Iowa at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in May, 2012. Pavane also won 1st place in the Plant Sciences category, 3rd place in the Senior Individual Biological Seminar, and was awarded over \$7,200 in prizes and scholarships for her project.

Also high school students at Rivermont Collegiate, Maghana Pagadala (12th grade) and Shravya Pothula (10th

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grade) both had impressive projects that made them Semi-finalists for the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. Meghana won

first place

in the Cellular & Molecular Biology category and was awarded over \$5,700 in prizes and scholarships for her project on the Mechanism By Which CD8+ FoxP3+ T-Cells Regulate Osteoclast Activity. Shravya won

second place

in the Medicine and Health Science category for her project on how Cardiac Resynchronization Therapy Reduces Mitral Valve Regurgitation.

But the high schoolers weren't the only winners at the competition! Not to be outdone by her older sister, 7th grade Rivermont student Manasa Pagadala was the winner of the **Grand Champion**

award in the Overall Junior High Biological division for her project titled How Do Spices Affect the Growth of Bacteria and Fungi?

Manasa also won 1st place in the 7th Grade Biology division, a University of Iowa College of Engineering scholarship, and she will compete at the Broadcom MASTERS (

Math,
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Engineering for
Rising
Stars) National Middle School Science Fair in Washington DC in the fall, 2012. Sixth grade Rivermont students Collin Smith, Klaus Storl-Desmond, and Aviana Zahara will also compete at the Broadcom MASTERS.

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Headmaster of Rivermont Collegiate, Rick St. Laurent, is extremely proud of this year's award winners and attributes much of the school's success to science teacher Linda Hampton who has been with the school for over 28 years. "Rivermont has a long list of graduates who have gone on to do amazing things in science and technology. Mrs. Hampton's passion for teaching science and inspiring students is one of the main reasons Rivermont does so well year after year at the State and National science competitions." says Mr. St. Laurent. "We continue our commitment to outstanding science and technology classes as part of our students' education and look forward to seeing what our students come up with next year."

Rivermont Collegiate has approximately 200 students in PreSchool - 12th grade. The science curriculum starts in Kindergarten. With a dedicated science teacher in their Lower School, students as young as 5 go to the science classroom 3 times a week. Mr. St. Laurent says, "Science is one of our younger students' favorite subjects. They love doing hands-on experiments and learning how things work. We tie science in with what they're doing in math, reading, and even social studies, so it provides a good, solid foundation for life-long learning."

Other Rivermont Collegiate winners at the Iowa State Science and Technology Fair include:

- Klaus Stori-Desmond (6th grade) – Do Moon Phases or Weather Factors Affect Different Coyote Calls? - 2nd place winner in 6th Grade Biological division and Broadcom MASTERS Junior High Finalist.
- Naina Ninan (6th grade) – How Does Temperature Affect Scindapsus Plants? - 10th place winner in 6th Grade Biological division.
- Lana Meier (6th grade) – Do Background Distractions Influence a Person's Hand-Eye Reaction Times? - 8th place winner in 6th Grade Biological division.
- Collin Smith (6th grade) - Do the Number of Magnets on a Guitar's Pick-Up Influence the Sound Frequency? - 4th place winner in 6th Grade Physical Science division, BroadcomMASTERS Junior High Finalist, and Student Incentive Prize Winner.
- Aviana Zahara (6th grade) – Which kinds of Bacteria Do We Find in the Mouths of Cats, Dogs, Horses, and Humans - 3rd place winner in 6th Grade Biological division, Broadcom MASTERS Junior High Finalist, and Horizon Award winner.
- Sarah Bowman (8th grade) – How Does Road Run-Off Affect the Germination and Growth of Common Seeds?- 5th place winner in 8th Grade Biological division.
- Marta Stori-Desmond (8th grade) – Does Precipitation Influence the pH, D.O. or Nitrate Levels in a Local River? - 9th place winner in 8th Grade Biological division and winner of special award from the Association for Women Geoscientists.

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When asked the secret to her success, teacher Linda Hampton humbly said, "I just love teaching science. The kids come up with their own science fair ideas; I am just here to provide guidance and support. Their enthusiasm and curiosity inspires me to keep learning myself. I am always amazed by what the students here are capable of."

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