



Whittier Union

HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Feb. 10, 2023 **CONTACT:** Andrea Garcia **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

Whittier Union High School Science Fair Prepares Students for Future Careers in STEM

WHITTIER – Pioneer High School provided a showcase for its future engineers and scientists, highlighting the curiosity and ingenuity of its science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) students, during a Science Fair, held Feb. 2-3. It is the first science fair held at Pioneer High in 30 years.

Does overcharging your electronic devices cause climate change? What is the effect of Ph levels on algae growth? Do vegan cleaning products work better than non-vegan products? What are the effects of feral cats in Whittier? These were among the 46 unique topics that 135 Pioneer students meticulously researched, designed and executed over the course of 20 weeks, then presented to their classmates and judges.

“We were absolutely thrilled to bring back the Science Fair this school year and provide our students with the opportunity to put their skills and knowledge to the test,” Pioneer High principal Mary Chapman said. “Our students went above and beyond in their research and creations, and we are proud of each of them. Pioneer High hopes to continue hosting the Science Fair each year and make it an annual tradition.”

Medals were awarded in several categories, including engineering/physical science, general biological science, plant science, environmental science, psychological science and best of show.

Pioneer High juniors Amybella Gaona, Galilea Gonzalez and Isabel Gonzalez were awarded first prize in Best of Show for designing an automatic pet feeder made almost entirely out of cardboard and duct tape. Similarly, juniors Jiselle Rivas, Jorge Rivas and Gabriela Gutierrez won first place in environmental science for designing a hydraulic robotic arm made of cardboard, popsicle sticks and plastic syringes.

“We were really surprised to win,” Galilea Gonzalez said. “We put so much effort into this project. Sometimes we would stay up until 3 a.m. working on it. It was exhausting but very satisfying to win.”

Pioneer High physics and chemistry teacher and department chair Matt Murray said the science fair is just one part of the school’s effort to create an extracurricular science program that will encourage and prepare its students for future study in STEM.

Among the extracurricular activities available to Pioneer students are trips to CityLab at UCLA, where students spend the day on campus working side by side with science undergrads exploring experimental science. The Cyber Patriots program trains students to analyze and solve cyber security threats.

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The National Science Bowl team prepares students for an annual competition held at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. The Science Club is an afterschool club that hones its engineering and coding skills in advance of the annual Whittier Union Science Cup.

“Each program Pioneer High offers creates a new group of students who are interested in STEM, while providing them with a wide range of perspectives and guidance,” Murray said. “The science extracurricular clubs and activities give the students experiences that inspire them to take an interest in STEM, a place where they can feel supported and achievements that inspire them to go on.”

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

WUHS_D_SCIENCE1: Pioneer High School juniors Isabel Gonzalez (left) and Galilea Gonzalez (right) demonstrate an automatic pet feeder made almost entirely of cardboard and duct tape during the school’s first annual Science Fair, held Feb 2-3. Along with classmate Amybella Gaona, the students were awarded the science fair’s top prize, first place in Best of Show. The science fair, a showcase to highlight the curiosity and ingenuity of Pioneer’s STEM students, returned to the school for the first time in 30 years.

WUHS_D_SCIENCE2: Pioneer High School juniors Jiselle Rivas (left), Jorge Rivas (center) and Gabriela Gutierrez (right) are all smiles after being awarded the environmental science first prize for their hydraulic robotic arm made of cardboard, popsicle sticks and plastic syringes, during the school’s first annual Science Fair, held Feb 2-3. The science fair is one part of the school’s efforts to create an extracurricular science program that will encourage and prepare its students for future study in STEM.

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