

## Dayton speech and debate team impressive in fourth year of competitive tournaments

Jonathan Strouse started the Speech and Debate Team at Dayton Transitional High School four years ago for what he says is a very simple reason.

"I do speech and debate for the simple fact that it helps students learn," he said. "It increases their critical thinking skills faster than almost anything else that we do.

"Also, for our kids it provides a level of confidence and self worth that they ordinarily aren't armed with," he added.

This year there were nine students who reaped the benefits by competing in a variety of events. The team competed in seven tournaments this year. For the first time, the group traveled outside the Miami Valley to compete at statewide events in Toledo, Vermilion, Cleveland and Columbus.

In addition to competing, Brodie Dalton served as an assistant coach this year, helping other students to prepare.

"I did this for one reason," Brodie said. "I was never really good at anything else. Speech and politics is something I've always been into. I joined the team and I've done most of the events that Mr. Strouse wants people to do. I wanted to compete one last time. Also, by helping others prepare, I know this really will help most of these kids get into colleges because it's so hard getting into colleges nowadays. I enjoy helping people."

Nick McKenzie, Greg Foreman and Zach Raney competed in Student Congress, in which students write legislation that is then debated. Nick said he enjoys speech and debate because it challenges his mind.

"It enjoy coming up with new ideas on topics, coming up with different ways of looking at things," Nick said. "Basic school just teaches you how to think through a problem logically. Well, sometimes, the logical approach won't give you what you need. Speech and debate taught me there's another way to look at things."

Greg said he likes the competition. "I enjoy the ability to find the facts and compete against others," he said. "Also, it's a good thing to have on your college application."



Dayton Transitional High School's Speech and Debate Team front row (from left) is Zach Raney, Ben Merrill, Greg Foreman, Cara Floyd, Winston Swearingen. Back row: Patrick Hildebrand, Brodie Dalton, Sophie LaCaze, Nick McKenzie. Seated: Advisor Jonathan Strouse.

Zach said he originally joined for the boost it would give to his college credentials.

"I helped Patrick learn his speech," Zach said. "Also, I help other people learn how to speak to make sure they have the confidence I didn't have."

Patrick Hildebrand competed in Oratorical Interpretation, in which the student memorizes a speech written by someone else but delivers it using his own interpretation.

"It is fun to meet people at different schools," Patrick said. "You are meeting a more interesting group of people outside of your own school."

Winston Swearingen and Ben Merrill competed in Public Forum Debate, in which current events are debated and the topics change monthly. This category requires organizing materials from sources such as the New York Times and Time Magazine.

"I really want to go to college to become a technical writer," Winston said. "I think speech and debate will help me with that. I've actually become better at speaking through debate."

The team is part of the National Forensic League, of which only two percent of students in the United States are members.

"It is part of the things that colleges look for," Ben said. "National Forensic League is an honor society."

Sophie LaCaze and Cara Floyd compete in the Prose and Poetry events, in which they do dramatic readings. Sophie said she is adventurous and wanted to try this type of competition.

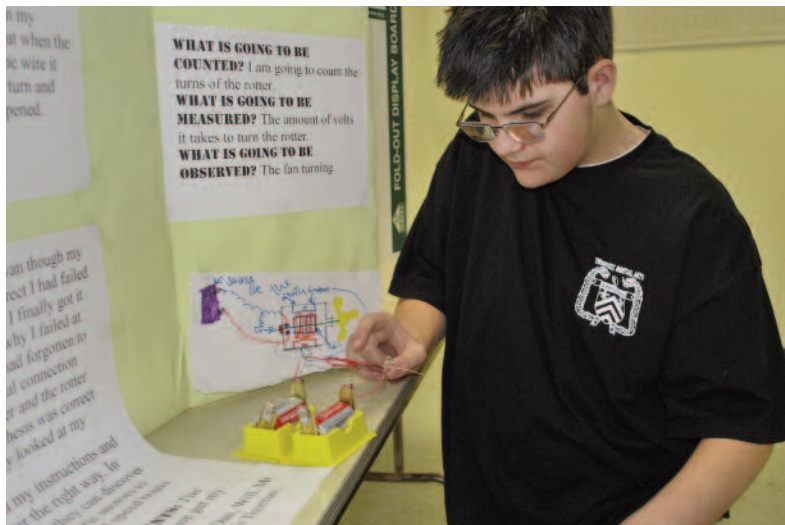
"It helps your social skills, so when you're socializing with somebody, they can fully understand what you're saying," she said. "It also makes you a bit more courageous in front of a crowd."

Sophie said she encouraged Cara to join because she was shy and it would be good for her. Cara said the experience has made her feel better about herself.

"Once you get into it, you get better at speaking," Cara said. "It's really worth it." There is an obvious camaraderie among the team members and Mr. Strouse.

"They're good kids," he said, smiling. "They work amazingly hard, considering what I ask of them."

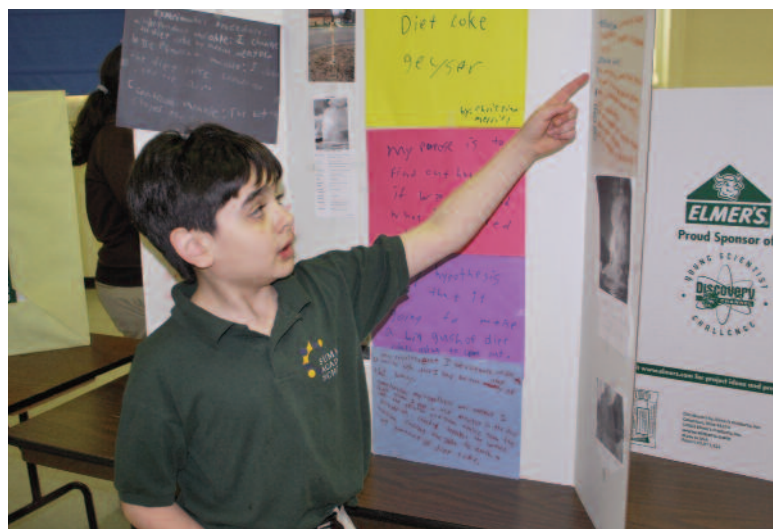
# Dayton Science Fair encourages scientific curiosity and discovery



Adam Williams demonstrates the electric motor he created.



William Smith's exhibit explored the concept of density.



Christian Merrill explains the details of his Diet Coke geyser.

More than 30 junior scientists participated in this year's Science Fair at Summit Academy Dayton Community School. The cafeteria was filled with exhibits and students eager to share their knowledge of a particular scientific principle.

What made this event even more remarkable, according to middle school math and science teacher Cassy Thomas, is that the students were solely responsible for their projects and had done all of the work in school.

"They were having so much fun," Ms. Thomas said. "Just the fact that they take ownership of it is rewarding."

Adam Williams, 8th grader, did his own research to understand how an electric motor worked. Although his favorite subjects are history and archeology, he said he was particularly interested in this subject.

"I chose it because it was hard to do and cool and complicated," Adam said. "I did the research on the Internet at home and in the library. I built 10 motors before I made one that worked."

Seventh grader William Smith said math is his favorite subject. Yet he chose the topic of density because "I get to mix things together and I thought it was going to explode."

Nakia Knight, also a seventh grader, said she enjoys science and was interested in learning about fog.

"There are at least 7 kinds of fog," Nakia said. "I did this as a fourth grade project but I wanted to know more about it."

Sixth grader Christian Merrill is fascinated by science in general and specifically, geysers such as Old Faithful. So he created the classic experiment with Diet Coke and a mint.

"My results are I got a big gush out of Diet Coke," Christian said. "It was so high I had to run out of the way. It was a fun, cool experience and it was really fun to watch it explode."



Nakia Knight created a scientific exhibit about fog.