

Coventry HS Science Fair Concludes with Flair

Patricia Ford project is judged 'Best of Fair' among 92 peers.

By [Russell Waterman](#) | February 6, 2012



The annual [Coventry High School](#) Science Fair, held Feb. 1-3, attracted over 150 students, parents, teachers and interested observers on its final night in the school library.

Among the 92 projects were studies and experiments on biology, physics, geology, chemistry, botany and psychology and other scientific disciplines and put on display over the three days.

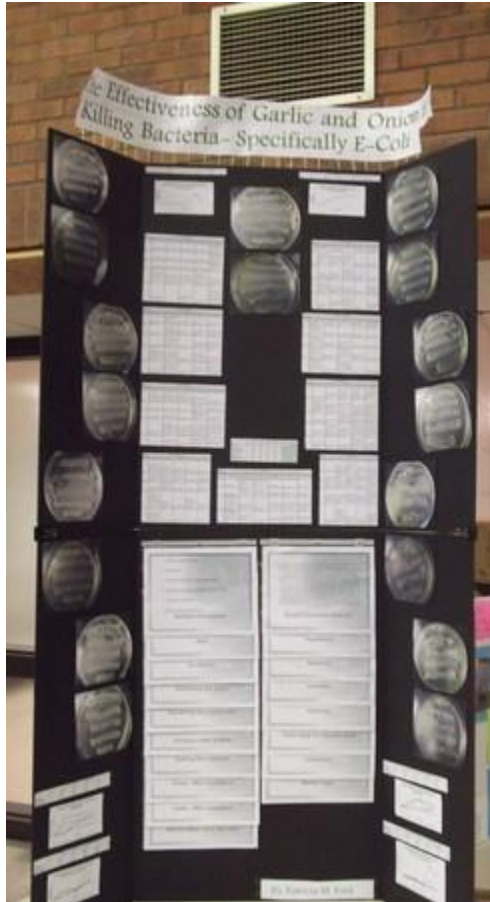
Projects focused on such varied topics as Biofuels, How Oil Spills Affect Birds in RI, Effects of Age on Time Perception, Investigation of Longer (Eye) Lashes and many others.

"We have 400 juniors in the school and they are all required to do a science project," said Coventry HS Science Department Chair, Kathleen Sullivan. "We have high expectations of all our science students from honors to college prep to those taking fundamental courses. This helps them acquire skills such as problem solving and critical thinking and is part of the (NECAP) New England Common Assessments Program to evaluate our science program."

Overall winners, presented with a red ribbon and symbolic glass beaker for their excellence, were: Best of Fair: Patricia Ford- The Effectiveness of Garlic on Bacteria, followed by Jacob Dazzeo- Benefits of Hydroponics & Pea Shoots, 2nd place overall and Elizabeth Paolucci- Neutralizing Stomach Acid, 3rd place.

Winners of the top three projects will represent CHS at the RI Science & Engineering Fair held for all high school science fair winners on March 17 at CCRI.

Ford said it took five days for her project to be completed. But like many of her peers, she had to do research before setting up the experiment and then observe, record careful notes and make careful measurements to prove or disprove her hypothesis.



"I found garlic reduced the colonies of E coli bacteria and that onion only reduced bacteria a little bit," said Ford, who noted her mother is employed in a science-related field, pharmacy. "I want to go into microbiology or be a veterinarian," she said.

"I concluded Alka Seltzer was the best to get rid of stomach acid*," said Paolucci, who compared the effects to four other popular antacids that were tested.

Dazzeo thinks hydroponics is "a cool hobby", but says his likely major in college will be Business. "My grandparents have a hydroponics farm called Green Arrow Farms in Maine and my grandmother suggested I do a project on hydroponics," he said.

"The pea shoots grew faster hydroponically than in enriched soil, but not as much as I thought they would," continued Dazzeo. "Most people who tasted the shoots liked the ones in hydroponics the best."

Three sophomores from one chemistry class- Jason Miech, Bobby Beaudoin and Matt Fusco- enjoyed giving live demonstrations on polymers, including how to make

styrofoam and slime.

Others winners were:

1st Grant: Jennifer Haley, Sunscreen Protection; Michaela Paolucci- Heat in Food; Cassie Champagne- Time Judgement; Alaa Eid- Caffeine; Gianna Rocchio- Lactose Production.

2nd Grant: Andrew Tanner, Does Speed Effect an Ollie?; Megan Quattrucci- UV Blocking and Fabric Color; Arielle Gagliardis- Acid in Vinegar; Nick Marsella- Electromagnets; Joshua Tatalo- Determining Strength of Wood; Caterina Morgera- Detergents and Mackenzie Mitchell- Golden Ratio.

3rd Grant: Amber Dyer- Comparing Efficiency of LED vs. Regular Light Bulbs; Catherine Cronin- Electric Generator; Natasha Chace- Algae Growth; Chris Comery- Insulators; Abby Fitzgerald- Measuring Blood Splatter; Jessica Burnham- A Study on the Effects of a Situation on a Witness's Memory.

"In other years, we've had special guest speakers who were graduates from Coventry HS who have gone on to pursue scientific careers," said Sullivan after the projects were viewed. "This year, we have invited our own CHS Science Teacher, Tiffany Risch.

Risch regaled the audience with a slide-show presentation on a scientific expedition she took last summer with an international contingent of teachers and scientists on a 16-day expedition on the US

Endeavor to the Black, Mediterranean and Aegean Seas, centered around Turkey and Greece. The trip was led by famed explorer, Dr. Robert Ballard of Titanic fame, and who works at the University of Rhode Island.

Next year, Risch will be teaching Oceanography, a half-credit course to juniors and seniors, the first time will be offered at the school.

“We would like to thank Amgen and their employees who helped judge the projects, the students who did all the work and research on their projects and the parents and families who helped to support the students,” said Sullivan.