

SPRING WAS IN THE AIR AS ST. A'S STUDENTS SING AND DANCE THEIR HEARTS OUT!

Mrs. Shirman and the Kindergarten to Fifth grade students presented the Spring Musical, "Spring Is The Thing" on Thursday evening, May 19. The show started off with a beautiful tribute to Our Blessed Mother, as some very talented fourth grade students composed their own poems, and lyrics and music as well. Layna T. recited her original poem and sang along with Sharbella J., and Gabrielle M. to the song they wrote "Good Mary." (They were also joined on stage by Erin L. and Abigail H.) The Kindergarten and First grade students delighted the audience with their adorable costumes and dance movements. All the students in 2nd grade to 5th grade sang with such joy and enthusiasm that they had the audience singing and clapping right along with them. Kudos and thanks to Mrs. Shirman, all the teachers and aides, but most especially to all our awesome and talented STARS-you really shined brightly here on the stage at St. A's.



St. Augustine School Holds First-Ever STEAM Expo

The St. Augustine of Canterbury School gym was transformed into an exhibition center as the school held its first STEAM Expo on Wednesday, May 11. "STEAM" expands on traditional STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) by adding an art component to foster creativity along with critical thinking skills. The Expo showcased the five elements of STEAM individually and in combination at booths featuring collections of student projects from Pre-K 3 to 8th Grade, interactive demonstrations, and hands-on activities for the nearly 200 visitors that filled the gym at any one time.

When Principal Sister Mary Louise Shulas, MPF, presented the idea of a STEAM Expo, the original plan was simply to breathe new life into the school's annual Middle School Science Fair. With the enthusiastic support and teamwork of teachers, students, and parents, the event took on a life of its own and mushroomed into an unforgettable evening that brought the entire community together to experience STEAM first hand.

Guests were greeted at the door by a large flat-panel display showing a map of the Expo complete with a QR code which they could scan and have a copy of the map downloaded to their mobile device. The gym was filled with excitement and exploration as visitors made their way to the various exhibits. Crowds gathered around the grade units' interactive booths, which were filled with individual and collaborative student projects exemplifying the STEAM ideal. Another table featured students happily demonstrating and having guests play the math-based boards games they created in class, while in the center of the gym groups of students performed a variety of science experiments with the help of willing volunteers from the crowd. The balcony became a fine arts gallery, with displays of artwork in various media and techniques created by students of every grade. Mrs. Vakil, a school parent, commented, "Every age is represented here tonight and you can see the progression of learning. It is so impressive to see in the projects beginning in the Pre-K and in the Kindergarten. Everyone is participating and having fun learning."

STEAM-themed extracurricular activities were on display as well. The school's Odyssey of the Mind and Robotics teams gave demonstrations of their competition projects, while members of the Knights Television Network crew gave visitors a behind-the-scenes look at their daily good news broadcast. The Mad Science program booth was a popular stop with its resident "Mad Scientist" making nearly 200 samples of multi-colored slime for the delighted onlookers. Next door at the Bricks 4 Kidz table, the program staff displayed motorized boats, planes, and other gadgets made with LEGO® building blocks. Also popular was the Google Earth display where guests could go virtually anywhere in the world with the touch of their fingers by manipulating a globe displayed on a touch-sensitive 70" LCD panel.

RESPECT TO LIFE CONTEST POSTER WINNERS



Pictured left to right: Sr. Barbara O'Kane, MPF, Patricia P., Bishop James Checchio, Kristina I., Elise Segally.

Kristina Ibe, Grade 7 was a first place winner and Patricia Pestano, Grade 8, second place winner.

A Mass, followed by a lovely luncheon was sponsored by the Respect to Life Diocesan Office under the direction of Jennifer Ruggiero. Parents, teachers and principals were invited. Each winner received a certificate and a calendar with the winning posters. Our students and teachers of Religion had the honor of meeting our new Bishop.

The centerpiece of the Expo was undoubtedly the makerspace area manned by the school's Tech Team which embodied the spirit of STEAM and the maker movement. A big attraction was of course the 3D printer, amazing onlookers as it turned a three-dimensional computer model into a solid object before their eyes. On display were the team's long-term projects: remote-controlled race cars which featured 3D-printed bodies designed in the modeling program Tinkercad and hand-decorated by the students, a motorized chassis built with snap-together electronic components called littleBits, and radio controllers also assembled from littleBits components. Team members took turns driving their cars around, and offered "test drives" to all who were interested. Visitors were also encouraged to try the many hands-on maker activities set up on tables around the makerspace. One table had a Makey Makey Kit that turned potatoes into video game controllers. Another had Snap Circuits Jr. and RC Rover kits with snap-together circuits used to build electrical projects and a fully-functional remote-controlled Rover. The younger children were drawn to the Wonder Workshop robots Dash and Dot, which could be operated using a coding app running on an iPad Mini. Families enjoyed building bridges using the STEM Bridge Building Center kits, and replicating a scene from the story of "Strega Nona" with STEAM kits containing common dollar-store items.

As they exited the Expo, guests were presented with one final twist: a display of "deconstructed social media" in which they were invited to post their comments and impressions of the event not on a digital wall with keyboards, mobile devices and hashtags, but rather on the window of the school office with markers and Post-It notes. One student wrote, "The STEAM Expo was fantastic! So much fun" and drew a smiley face, confirming that Emojis can also exist outside of cyberspace. Another wrote, "I loved making slime and looking at all the science experiments! I enjoyed and had fun with all the interactive activities."

Comments from the adults were equally positive. Wrote one parent, "God has truly blessed St. A's, and tonight He's showing off! It's all wonderful." Said another, "Great fun for the kids & moms & dads alike. A must for next year!" But perhaps the best comment of all really captured the spirit of the evening: "It was wonderful to see how STEAM is alive and well at St. A's!! The students' work was really creative. I loved seeing students explaining what they have been doing and seeing their creativity. So many students were engaged in the activities and their faces came alive as they participated in the activities. My kids had a BLAST! Thanks!"



SCIENCE



TECHNOLOGY



ENGINEERING

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