

Oiler Spills December 2019

On Wednesday, November 6, 2019, over 300 students at Nathan Hale and Whiting Middle School, along with their families, participated in Mission Possible, a fun and engaging STEM Night at Nathan Hale Elementary. Students explored STEM activities that were focused on space and the Apollo 11 mission. Activities included a space exploration with the Challenger Learning Center, who brought their portable planetarium, a QR code scavenger hunt, where students were able to discover fun and interesting facts about the Apollo 11 mission, a UV light activity, a docking challenge, a design challenge where students created and launched their own rockets, and an engineering activity where students built their own wigglebot. The evening was planned and organized by the staff at Nathan Hale Elementary School and the sixth grade team at Whiting Middle School.

Fifth grader Jasmin Vasquez had fun working with her older sister, sixth grader Aubrie, to create a wigglebot using materials including batteries, a motor, clothespins, tape, and markers. While the wigglebot was an engineering challenge for some students, they never gave up and persevered. "It took awhile to figure out how we could make it go in a circle, but we kept moving things around and made all three of the legs balanced and it finally worked!"

Second grader Michael Zamora had fun working his way through the different challenges and said, "I loved all the different activities where I got to make things and try out different designs like for the rockets! My rocket went farther than my sister's!" Michael and his family also enjoyed making their own moon rocks, creating constellations using pretzels and marshmallows, and playing space themed puzzles and games brought by Joel Bender from his store, Mind Benders. Joelle Wake and Lauri Rootes from the Whiting Public Library entertained students, as well, with the Planet Toss game, where students won fun space prizes.

Nathan Hale Principal Julie Pearson said, "STEM Night was a great opportunity for families to build, create, explore, and experiment together through fun and engaging challenges and activities that they were able to do together as a family. Students were excited to not just participate in the Science and Engineering activities but to find out why something reacted the way it did or how something worked, like the wrigglebots and rockets."

On November 22nd, 50 WHS students participated in the "Latino's Count" event held at George Rogers Clark High School in Robertsdale. Latino's Count is a non profit event focused on helping latino youth through mentorship and college and career awareness. The vision of Latino's count is "preparing youth with necessary skills to be leaders in the global environment". The event pairs students with mentors who are representatives from NIPSCO, Franciscan Health, the US Army, IvyTech, Walgreens, ArcelorMittal, and the Construction Advancement Foundation. The mentors discussions with the students focus on pathways from high school to work, from high school to the military, and from high school into a skilled trade or apprenticeship program. Students spend a full

day interacting with mentors who make a commitment to continue conversations and support of the participating students. The day culminated with the students learning about employer expectations and work skills in an effort to prepare them for future employment. It was a very valuable experience for our students that we hope to continue in future years.

Winter break for students and staff begins on Saturday December 23rd with classes resuming on Monday January 6th. I would like to wish all of our families a very blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year. Enjoy the holidays with your family and friends.