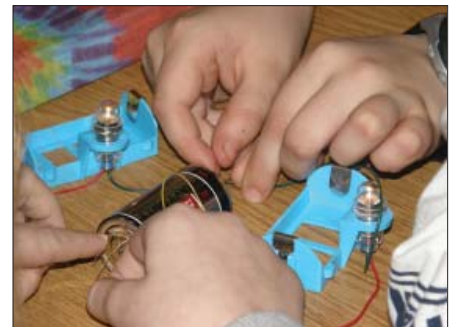
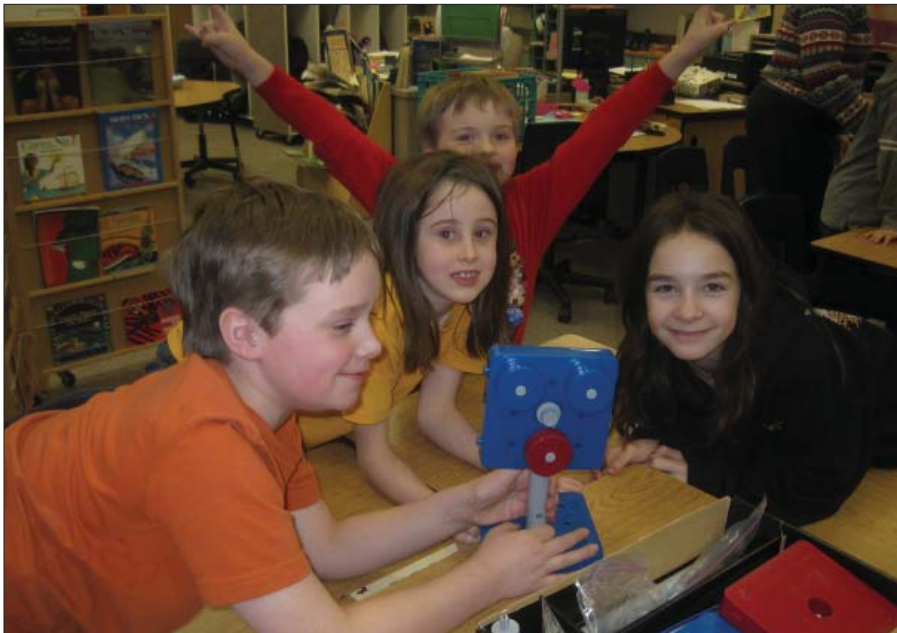


The CVEA Foundation Helps Increase Science Education In Our Schools



Left, simple machines are fun for students in Carla Schierholt's 2nd grade class

Photo courtesy WISE

Above, students lighting bulbs with a battery and conducting wires

Photo by Sharon Crisp

Since 2010, the Wrangell Institute for Science and the Environment (WISE) and the Copper Valley Electric Association Community Foundation (CVEACF) have been working together to bring a new science education program to our schools.

The 'Junior Scientist' program was developed by Bruce James, of WISE, in an effort to increase their commitment to science education, a significant part of the organization's mission. James recognized that the program would support the CVEACF's mission to contribute to educational and scientific organizations and programs within our communities and pitched the idea to the Foundation Board of Directors in 2011. They also talked to Copper Valley Telecom (CVT), who joined as an additional partner to ensure the program could be implemented in its entirety.

WISE met with the curriculum coordinator for the Copper River School District (CRSD) and identified science education as a need for the schools. Working together they targeted subjects important to the District and developed a curriculum that could be supported by in-class demonstrations and hands-on science kits.

Kits will be purchased for grades K-8 and will include topics/projects on magnets, electricity, machines, sound, chemistry, energy, heat, and energy transfer, chemical bonds and reactions, and electromagnetic radiation and light.

WISE, in partnership with the CRSD, the CVEACF, and CVT was excited to kick off the new program, that promises to touch every elementary and middle school student in the Copper Basin and beyond, at the Kenny Lake School in December 2011.

All of the partners anticipate the program becoming a regular part of science education in the Copper Basin and are looking forward to expanding the program to the Valdez School District in the near future.

The first Junior Scientist kit to be put to the test was "Simple Machines" for second grade and Carla Schierholt's class in Kenny Lake was the "guinea pig." The curriculum was taught by WISE volunteers, Janelle Eklund and Paul Boos. The young students enjoyed interactive learning about levers, wheels and axles, inclined planes, pulleys and gears.

The class was split into small groups and then with components from the kits, used the different simple machines to accomplish work. By doing it themselves, students experienced first hand how to perform tasks beyond what could normally be done with just their hands.

Another Junior Scientist kit, "Introduction to Electricity", has been used for Barb Wallace's first grade and Laura Rosen's fourth grade students. Students had a great time seeing the effects of static electricity, especially on balloons.



Then with batteries, light bulbs, and simple circuits, students learned how electricity flows from a source through conducting wires, what happens when increasing the voltage of a circuit, and what happens when circuits are broken. To finish up, the group had a long talk about being safe around power lines, outlets and appliances.

Sharon Crisp, CVEA Manager of Member Services, was on hand during the fourth grade program. According to Crisp, “it was great to see the excitement of the students. They were very engaged from start to finish; paying attention during the presentation, eager to get their hands on the experiments, and successfully answering questions when they were finished.”

“The CVEA Community Foundation is committed to the education of youth in our service districts. Through the scholarship program, youth leadership program, and now the support of the Junior Scientist program implemented by WISE, the Foundation continues to invest in our students and our communities.”

WISE, the CVEACF, and CVT are excited for the growth of this program and hope to soon see it used in all K-8 classrooms in the Copper Basin and Valdez.

Kits are available for presentations. To arrange an appointment to have a WISE volunteer come to your classroom, contact Bruce James at 822-3575 or email bjames@wise-edu.org. ■



Top Left, 4th grade Kenny Lake School teacher Laura Rosen with students learning about electricity during the Junior Scientist Program presentation

Photo by Sharon Crisp

Top Right, Bruce James of WISE working with Jacob Gottschalk to demonstrate the effects of static electricity on balloons while Mary Marie Wallace and other classmates watch closely

Photo by Sharon Crisp

Above (left to right), Alexis Hardy, Brooks Christian, and Darian Wilson work together to make a double circuit