

Los Cerritos stands apart at county science fair

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QUEST FOR KNOWLEDGE—Trupti Guhan of Westlake Village looks at one of the many projects on display during the 64th annual Ventura County Science Fair on March 26 at Cal Lutheran University in Thousand Oaks. It was the event's first year at CLU after decades at the Ventura County Fairgrounds. BOBBY CURTIS/Acorn Newspaper

Projects at the 2018 Ventura County Science Fair took aim at local issues.

Using the Thomas fire as a point of reference, a team of students from Rio Mesa High School in Oxnard researched flame-retardant paint and other building materials meant to help save homes from wildfires. Another RMHS team examined the impact of the Hill Canyon Wastewater Treatment Plant on the health of the Arroyo Conejo.

But some of the scholars turned to the sky for inspiration.

One student from Los Cerritos Middle School in Thousand Oaks took his cue from the SpaceX launch of the Falcon 9 rocket in December and fashioned a potato launcher out of PVC pipes.

These projects were among the nearly 1,000 that were on display last month during the first county science fair to be held at Cal Lutheran University. Winners were announced March 26 during a ceremony at Ventura County Office of Education in Camarillo.

Thirty-seven projects by Conejo Valley Unified students, either individually or in teams,

received first-, second-, third-place awards or honorable mentions in their category, including 29 from Los Cerritos. Students completed research in categories including microbiology, engineering and chemistry.

The winning entries were chosen by around 275 professionals in the fields of science, engineering and industry who volunteered their expertise for the event. An additional 14 projects by CVUSD students were honored by local companies and science organizations in special categories including geology and psychology.

Districts across the county took home honors.

Santa Susana High School in Simi Valley took home first place in the environmental sciences category.

Simi Valley Unified sixthgrader Sean Vertuno was recognized by the Ventura County Amateur Radio Club for his experiments with electrical voltage. The Vista Fundamental School student said his favorite part of his project was working with a Tesla coil.

“It sparked,” he said.

His classmate Nuria Gordon took home second place in the middle school botany category for her experiment on the effect of aspirin on radishes.

“It was basically an overdose,” she said.

Nuria’s mother, Claudia Gordon, said she’s glad her daughter, who normally shows interest in the humanities, dedicated herself so fully to researching and executing her project.

“She’s broad in her interests,” Gordon said. “She loves science but she’s all about the Tudors right now.”

Around 40 Ventura County Science Fair participants will advance to the California State Science Fair, April 23 to 24 at the California Science Center in Los Angeles.
