

“Show What You Know” Expo

at Forest Edge Elementary on Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Kid-driven, interactive, and way more than a science fair—it’s an EVERYTHING fair!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (as of January 31, 2016)

Do I really have to use a trifold poster board?

Yes. Why? A few reasons:

- A project board helps visitors identify your project and defines your space. Even if you create a three-dimensional model, experiment, or exhibit, using a trifold poster as a backdrop frames and draws attention to your display and also gives visitors important information that they may need in order to understand what you are showing them and why. Remember, too, that you will not always be standing by your display to explain it to people. During part of the Expo, you will be walking around to view the other displays. (FYI, trifolds cost about \$5 each and are readily available at craft, office supply, and other stores. In case of financial need, please contact the front office.)
- The requirement of including a project board need not limit your creative spirit. YOU choose how to use that space. The trifold may serve some students as a good place to start, others as a complete display in itself, and others as a way to force themselves to extend their knowledge and think deeply about how to communicate their information using words, pictures, diagrams, etc.
- For planning and set-up purposes, we need to know how much space you will use. Our goal is to accommodate all the creativity and enthusiasm of our Forest Edge students, while still dividing up the space equitably and making the evening simple logistically.

So, I just go to Wikipedia and paste up a bunch of stuff about my topic?

No! Please don’t do that. Of course, it’s OK to use on-line resources, including Wikipedia, to learn more about your topic, and to find images and details there that you may choose to share and include. But this is an opportunity to describe your topic and present your ideas about it in your own words, and to create some pictures, diagrams, and other images of your own that express what YOU have learned and how YOU think about the information you are presenting. Try to convey what it is about your topic that makes it meaningful to you. Make connections! Bring the viewer into your world! Have fun! Remember, the aim is not to make a perfectly polished professional poster, but to show what you are thinking about your topic and share your interest in it. (Also of course please remember it’s proper to credit any sources for borrowed material.)

My really cool project needs to be plugged in. Will I have access to an electrical outlet?

Please note this need on your registration form, and we will do our best to accommodate you. Similarly, please note any other special project requirements. If we know in advance, we can do our best to help you find a way to achieve what you are attempting in a way that fits the context of this event.

Will I stay by my project the whole time?

During the Expo, you will have an assigned time to stay by your project, and another assigned time to walk around and view the projects of other students. Interacting with visitors and other exhibitors is a core part of Show What You Know. By rotating which groups are walking around and which are staying by their exhibits, we can make sure everyone gets a chance to interact with others both as a viewer and as an exhibitor, and that all get a chance to view all exhibits.

But my display will contain my favorite Lego pieces, my collection of rare seashells, and my dad's laptop! Who will make sure these prized possessions are not lost or harmed?

The simple answer is, no one will. While all visitors will be instructed to be respectful and to look with their eyes, not their hands, we cannot guarantee that there will be nothing lost or damaged. So, please don't bring with you anything fragile, irreplaceable, or of great value (sentimental, monetary, or otherwise). Whatever you bring with you is displayed at your own risk. If you believe that displaying something itself is too risky, please consider including a photograph, drawing, and/or description instead. (Of course, you may attempt to convince your parent(s) or guardian to guard your stuff, but that's between you and them.)

I'd like to participate, but I really have no idea how to get started. What can I do?

You might try looking at the "Brainstorming Starters" section below. Also, just to get revved up, take a peek at the photos of past-year projects, to be posted soon (in conjunction with the 2016 SWYK event page) at forestedgepta.com. Then go read or do something related to a topic you might choose, to remind yourself what you like about it. Remember that you can start small and build from there. Just gather some thoughts and write or draw them, then follow where that leads. There is no one right way to do this, and your display doesn't have to be elaborate.

May I hand out treats when people come to see my project?

No, if by "treats" you mean any kind of food product. Food products are also not allowed to be included in displays (although your display could be about food or cooking). But non-food treats or giveaways—especially those you prepare yourself, such as pictures, charts, or puzzles—are allowed.

May I include my pet [fill in the blank: hamster, gerbil, rabbit, turtle, boa constrictor, komodo dragon, ...] in my display?

Sorry, no live animals are allowed in displays. You're welcome to present a display ABOUT your favorite pet and/or its species. Just please leave the actual critter at home.

Can my display be interactive?

Certainly! A few examples of cool displays we've seen that had a special interactive component: a Raspberry Pi contraption that took people's photos; displays that included quizzes or puzzles for the viewer; and two displays—one about the so-called "Bermuda Triangle" and another titled

“Time Travel & Multiverses”—that asked visitors to jot down their own ideas on Post-Its. Of course, all displays are fundamentally interactive, because visitors look at them and interact with the students who made them.

May I bring my project a few days early and keep it at school?

Sorry, no. You will need to bring it on the day of the Expo. (Further instructions for the day of the event will be provided to participants.)

I really miss having a science fair, and I want to do a more traditional science fair project. OK?

Yes, of course! We love science fairs, too, and you are welcome to make your display as formal, technical, and highly structured as you wish. If you’d really like to get into science-fair mode, check out the information at http://sciencefairproject.virtualave.net/scientific_method.htm about the scientific method and how a hypothesis, experiment, and results may be reported systematically. But please know that you are also welcome to focus on a scientific topic of your choice without conducting your own experiments. We hope this will allow a broader range of students to find their way into scientific exploration and to explore a broader range of topics.

Well, I DON’T miss having a science fair, and I DON’T want to choose a topic that teachers teach about in school. Is this event still for me?

Well, what do you do *after* school? Do you play sports? Do you like music? Is there a particular show or game or character that fascinates you? Do you know everything there is to know about the Olympics, or robots, or treehouses, or turtles? Do you knit? Make clothes out of duct tape? Grow a garden? Fly RC airplanes or drones? What’s the most interesting place you ever visited? This is your chance to show your fellow students what you’re interested in. Yes, it’s a school event, but the choice is entirely yours.

But I’m just a kindergartner. I can’t even read these FAQs. Isn’t this really just for the big kids?

No. NO! Absolutely NOT! This is your event, too. Do you like pets? Do you play with trains? Do you have a favorite book or game? Have you ever noticed the colors on soap bubbles and wondered how they got there? What is the craziest animal you ever saw at the zoo? This is your event, not just your big brother’s or sister’s. Please join us. And if you don’t feel ready yet to make a display of your own, at least please come visit the Expo to look around and see what’s there. There’s always next year!

(Parents: It may help to show younger kids the photos of past-year projects that will be posted soon, along with the new SWYK event page, on forestedgepta.com. Several of these were done by kindergartners. Also, it might help as a starting point to ask your young child to write or dictate five things he or she knows about his or her topic, then expand to a couple of specific thoughts or pictures about each of those, etc. But if they see their own way to start, please just set them free! Some of the most awesome displays we have seen have sprung unaided and

unhindered from the minds and hands of 5-year-olds—please resist the temptation to steer them toward a more "grown-up" product.)

I'd like to ask for a special-needs accommodation. How do I do that?

Our goal is to make this program accessible for all students who wish to participate. More than that: SWYK is an opportunity for a diverse range of students to share their individual interests and perspectives; that sharing enriches the experience of all. If we may be of assistance in making this event work for you, please contact the SWYK Coordinator, c/o Kristen Chaddock, kpchaddockpta@gmail.com.

I attended SWYK last year, so I know how it works. Is anything new this year?

Well, in a sense, *everything* is new, because all the projects will be new. The structure, however, will be essentially the same. We may schedule some optional “open work sessions” for those who enjoy camaraderie while preparing their projects, and there may be a few other surprises. Stay tuned!

I know I want to present something, but I'm still deciding what. Or, I have a general topic area, but I may need to tweak it a bit. Or, I'm struggling to decide between two possible topics. Should I go ahead and register now?

Yes, *as long as you are committed to displaying a project at, and attending, the April 6 evening event*. For many students, deciding on a topic early helps move the project along. Others know they want to participate, but need more time to decide on the specifics. As long as you can commit to submitting a project and to attending the Expo, please register as soon as possible (and no later than March 8), so we can start making a list of those presenting. Including a tentative topic on the registration form is helpful, but “to be determined” is also OK. A few days after the registration deadline, we will email all those who registered to confirm project titles.

Sorry, I've decided not to do a project this year, so I won't be registering, but I'd still like to attend the SWYK Expo on Wednesday evening, April 6, to see all the projects and talk with the kids about them. OK?

YES! YES! PLEASE DO! And bring your family. This is an event for the entire Forest Edge community. Students who want to share a display must register by Tuesday, March 8, 2016, but all students and their families are welcome to attend the event, explore, and enjoy the displays and conversation. Teachers and other staff members, this goes for you, too!

Will these FAQs be updated?

YES! Please see the forestedgepta.com website's SWYK event page (coming soon!) for the most up-to-date version. Further updates may also be communicated via the PTA's Monday Mail email newsletter.

BRAINSTORMING STARTERS

If you like science, how about ...

- conducting an experiment where you observe how something changes (plants, weather, etc.)
- explaining something about a scientific topic such as weather, chemistry, astronomy, physics, plants, animals, ecology, ...
- telling all about an important scientific discovery
- finding out about space travel, perhaps by describing a journey through the solar system
- pretending you are inside a ship traveling through the human body

If you like to think about other times, places, and cultures, how about ...

- researching an important person, event, or era in history
- explaining what your life would be like if you lived at some time in the past
- imagining and describing what life might be like in the future
- sharing discoveries about a certain culture or country
- pretending you are a famous explorer and writing about your adventure
- comparing past and present
- documenting “a day in the life of...”
- investigating cultural traditions
- creating your own maps of a geographic region (real or imagined, in the present or in the past or future, on Earth or not ...)
- finding a way to solve a world problem

If technology & invention fascinate you, how about ...

- designing your own invention, toy, or game
- designing a “Rube Goldberg” invention
- explaining how something works
- making your own web page (ask a parent for help)
- researching the development of technology, or how things might change in the future
- designing and/or building a robot
- checking out <http://tinkering.exploratorium.edu/projects> or <http://makezine.com/tag/kids-family/> to find new ways to create

If literature, art, or music is your thing, how about ...

- writing your own book, collection of stories, or collection of poetry
- making a themed mobile or collage
- writing new words to a song or rap based on a theme
- drawing the maps and diagrams you would need to visit the world of your favorite character
- presenting your favorite book or series using drawings, dioramas, or stop-motion animation
- investigating a period of art or a particular artist
- researching the publishing process
- drawing the comic-book version of your life ... or someone else’s
- collecting and sharing your favorite quotations

If you have a hobby or collection, how about ...

- showing what you do and how
- cluing others in to what you collect and why it fascinates you

If sports are your life, how about ...

- explaining the finer points of your favorite game
- researching the history of your favorite sport
- explaining the physics of your favorite sport (what makes balls bounce or curve, etc., etc.)
- explaining what happens when our bodies exercise
- researching some of the special technologies used by athletes with disabilities

If you're into design, architecture, or city planning, how about ...

- designing a school, amusement park, or playground
- designing a “green” town (ecology-friendly)
- designing your own futuristic city (on Earth? in space? underwater? underground?), including envisioning future means of transportation, communication, and housing

REMEMBER:

These ideas are offered just to get you started ...

Use your imagination ...

Follow where it leads ...

EXPLORE! ENJOY!