

Rockets, Eggs, and Safety Goggles



Students compete in the Rocket Boat Rally during the 2014 Elementary Science Olympiad.

Normally, you wouldn't encourage kids to drop eggs on your floor. But this Saturday, all the rules got bent (or possibly refracted) at Clark College's seventh annual Elementary Science Olympiad, where third-through-fifth graders tested the limits of physics with egg drops and challenged their engineering skills with rockets powered by vinegar and baking soda.



Students from Eisenhower Elementary celebrate an unbroken egg after dropping it from the balcony of PUB 161.

Twenty-four teams from 22 different schools in 10 different districts (including one team each from Cowlitz and Pacific counties) participated in this year's olympiad, making for a total of 328 elementary students participating—Clark's largest-ever attendance for the event.

"Interest level this year was amazing and meant we had to work just to squeeze all the teams in," says Clark STEM Coordinator and biology instructor Erin Harwood, who coordinates the event. "We couldn't say no when there was so much enthusiasm!"

The event's size meant the need for even more support from the college community—which, as in years past, stepped in to volunteer. In all, 67 members of the Clark community—including students, faculty, staff, and even a dean—spent their Saturday morning helping young scientists compete in five different event categories. "Four out of five events were new this year, making for an exciting and challenging year," says Harwood.



Engineering instructor Carol Hsu gets participants excited at the 2014 Elementary Science Olympiad.

This year, Chief Umtuch Middle School (Battle Ground) and CAM Academy (Battle Ground) vied for top honors in each competition (see PDF for full list). But as pictures from the fun-filled event show, when young people gather to celebrate science, everyone's a winner.

Pictures: Clark College/Jenny Shadley. See more pictures in Clark's Flickr album.