RESTEK
Pure Chromatography

Restek Inspires Future Scientists at STEM Fair

Teaching the concepts of chromatography to elementary and middle school students in Central Pennsylvania is another way Restek connects with and gives back to the community.

Scott Grossman, Fang-Yun Lo, Samantha Harter, and Titus Morehead visited Park Forest Middle School to present during the school's STEM Fair.

An auditorium full of middle schoolers may seem like a tough audience for teaching new scientific concepts, but in Restek's experience, they are quite attentive and engaged. So, employees at Restek love taking the opportunity to share their knowledge with area youth.

"I could go through a slide show presentation, but something tells me you wouldn't be that interested in it. So, I'm going to get you involved and teach you through action," Scott Grossman, a content development specialist at Restek, told an auditorium of more than 200 students in April.

For years, teams at Restek have presented a variety of interactive performances to elementary and middle school students about chromatography. This past April, Grossman, with his colleagues Samantha Harter, Fang-Yun Lo, and Titus Morehead, visited Park Forest Middle School to present during the school's STEM Fair. The annual event encourages student involvement and future careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

"We keep inviting Restek back because their presentation is high quality and they do a good job at communicating what they do at an appropriate level for the students," Mike Bierly, an eighth-grade science teacher at Park Forest, said.

This year's presentation teaches chromatography by comparing it to a party. The presenters invite dozens of students on stage to create a party atmosphere that will function like a chromatography column's stationary phase. Then, other students pass through the party—some having been instructed offstage to interact extensively with other partygoers, while others were instructed to interact very little and "elute" quickly, ignoring the party and passing straight to the food table. As students reach the food table, "peaks" in an illustrative chromatogram are generated. Grossman explains that analyzing these different types of partygoers is very similar to how chemists use chromatography to analyze the contents of liquid and gas samples—compounds interact with the column's stationary phase to different degrees, allowing them to be separated and, ultimately, identified.

"It's fun to see the students engage and start to understand the concepts," said Harter, a process engineer at Restek.

Lori Dundon, a Restek marketing communications manager, kick-started Restek's engagement with local elementary and middle schools in Central Pennsylvania years ago when her kids were attending Park Forest Middle School.

"I wanted my kids to understand what I do for work," she said.

Grossman took on the challenge of developing a presentation and has since offered it, and others, to many local schools and thousands of future scientists.

"It's like I always tell the students—it doesn't matter what you end up doing in your career, you need to be a good communicator," he said.

To learn more about Restek Corporation, visit **www.restek.com**

Restek Corporation
www.restek.com
1-814-353-1300, ext. 3

GNPR2696-UNV