

CITY/METRO

The Pueblo Chieftain 138th Year... and still on the job! Sunday April 15, 2007



CHIEFTAIN PHOTO/JOHN JAQUES

Aaron Kinnischtzke, 10, (left) and his sister Meghan Kinnischtzke, 7, take part in a 'Bioluminescence' experiment during the Super Science Saturday at the Steelworks Museum of Industry & Culture.

'Fun'damentals of science wow the kids at museum

Steelworks museum promotes science education through demonstration programs.

By NICK BONHAM
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

Science mixed with history Saturday resulting in a compound reaction of "wows" and "aahs."

"This was excellent," said Tamera Pierre, a native of Las Animas who brought her two daughters to Pueblo for the Cool and Creative Chemistry demonstrations held throughout the day at the Steelworks Museum of Industry & Culture.

Pierre's daughters, Caitlyn, 12, and Chelsea, 7, are home-schooled. Free educational events such as Saturday's are great opportunities for a field trip.

"We have little groups all over the valley looking to do things like this," Pierre said. "I have an aunt in Pueblo who showed us the flier about this because she knows the girls love science."

"Our goal is to connect school science curriculum with experiments they do at visits that are related to the coal and steel industry," said Carol Fortino, the museum's educational consultant.

The museum opened in January and is a historic tribute to generations of various ethnic groups who worked at the CF&I Steel Mill. Since that time, more than 500 students have toured the Bessemer facility, Fortino said.

Saturday's event is one of four free science demonstrations that will be held throughout the year at the museum.

"We are bridging together science with the history of the museum," said Maria Sanchez-Kennedy, museum director. "There are so many science concepts to talk about. Educational science is so important not only to this community, but the nation as a whole."

Thanks to a grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation, experiments were run by Barbara Monday, a director with the University of Colorado (Boulder) Science Discovery program.

Dozens of children and parents learned about atoms and molecules, elements and compounds, combustion, bioluminescence, cellular respiration, the periodic table of elements, and photosynthesis.

"It's a nice visual," Monday said of the various experiments. "They really get a sense of it."

And no experiment was complete without some kind of cool chemical reaction to show different methods of producing energy, whether it be a small explosion or making a flask glow in the dark.

In one energy experiment, Monday combined oxygen and ethanol in a flask, and then shut off the lights. She added fire to the mixture and, in a quick flash - BOOM!

"Whoooooa! That was cool!" exclaimed folks in the crowd.