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Four Solon High School students participate in White House Science Fair

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 By **Kyla Price, Sun News**
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COURTESY OF SOLON SCHOOLS

Solon High School students, from left, Andrew Mikofalvy, Katrina Mikofalvy, Lisa Guo and Kevin Sun take part in the White House Science Fair.

SOLON - President Barack Obama honored four Solon students in addition to more than 100 students from 40 STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) competitions around the country during the second White House Science Fair.

Student representatives from Solon were invited as a result of their team's performance at the May 2011 National Science Olympiad Tournament, where Solon's teams won the middle school and high school divisions.

The fair is a branch of Obama's "Educate to Innovate" campaign, aimed at improving participation and performance of America's students in STEM education. Obama toured various science fair exhibits to see students' work and then shared remarks that discussed the importance of STEM

education to the country's economic future.

Several STEM educators and advocates attended the fair, including Bill Nye the Science Guy, astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson and Jo Handelsman, professor of molecular, cellular and developmental biology at the Yale School of Medicine.

During the fair, Obama announced plans to allocate over \$100 million to prepare 100,000 new science, technology, engineering and math teachers over the next decade. His plan also includes training an additional one million STEM graduates.

"When students excel in math and science, they help America compete for the jobs and industries of the future," Obama said.

"That's why I'm proud to celebrate outstanding students at the White House Science Fair, and to announce new steps my administration and its partners are taking to help more young people succeed in these critical subjects."



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His new budget will request \$80 million for a new competition by the Department of Education to support effective STEM teacher preparation programs, in addition to a \$22 million investment from the philanthropic and private sectors.

The four Ohio students who participated in this year's science fair were all from Solon and include seniors Andrew Mikofalvy and Lisa Guo, and sophomores Katrina Mikofalvy and Kevin Sun. They were accompanied by their coaches, Drew Kirian and Donna Ross. The students showcased devices they created for the National Science Olympiad Competition, including a robotic arm, mouse trap vehicle, towers and sumo-bots.

"Going to the White House was kind of unreal," Sun said. "To be able to see the president and be part of this grand event he put together was an honor."

Sun said he cannot fathom a world without science and technology.

"I don't see a future that doesn't involve science greatly, and I think that is why the president hosted the science fair," he said.

Guo said she is glad to see the nation's leaders taking time to support STEM education.

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