



## Top local students kick off yearlong science initiative

By Eileen O. Daday | Daily Herald Correspondent

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science, officials said.

Science Chicago will stretch from September through August 2009, and is being described as the "world's largest science celebration."

Officials with the Museum of Science and Industry are spearheading the effort, working in partnership with more than 100 academic, scientific, corporate and nonprofit institutions in the Chicago region.

Those already on board to receive programming include suburban libraries and park districts in Arlington Heights, Aurora, Batavia, Elgin, Glen Ellyn, Grayslake, Gurnee, Libertyville, Lincolnshire, Lisle, Naperville, Oakbrook Terrace, Rolling Meadows, Schaumburg, Wauconda, West Chicago and Woodstock.

Science Chicago's goal is to "awaken the inner scientist" in students and their families, by providing an assortment of dynamic and interactive activities.

"This is a huge, 12-month, nationwide initiative to get people taking about science, and experiencing it in new and different ways," says Cheryl Hughes, Science Chicago executive director.

With its many partners, the program will bring working scientists into local schools, offer teacher training at museums, and host specials like "Science Saturdays," giving behind-the-scene tours of local science laboratories, many of which are in the suburbs.

It all sounded good to eighth grader Annie Dunn of Arlington Heights, who was there with her Science Olympiad partner, David Brablec, to demonstrate their balloon launch glider, that earned them 2nd place at nationals.

Because of her exposure to science, and the hands-on events in Science Olympiad, Dunn can hold her own in conversations about aeronautical engineering principles, and such things as wing span, drag and speed.

"I guess what I liked was learning about things I wouldn't learn in school," Dunn says.

Also on hand were team members from the Wildstang team, comprised of Rolling Meadows and Wheeling High School students, which placed second at this year's FIRST Robotics Midwest Regionals.

Another pair of South Middle School students who participated was Madeline Hume and Jacki Rohde, both of Arlington Heights, demonstrating the robot they built and its capabilities, while describing its circuitry and wiring.

"It's really satisfying," Hume says, "knowing that we had built something that actually worked, and that we could run."