

## Science fair inspires kids

By [Staff Reports](#)

It doesn't take much research to find out how poorly most American schools are handling the education of our children, particularly in the arenas of math and science.

Back in December, the results of an international exam that scored 15-year-olds in math, science and reading were released, and they were again abysmal for the United States. American teenagers — albeit from only three states — scored average in reading and science and below average in math, a difficult finding for those who believe this country could and should be better at everything — and indeed, for the amount of money America spends on its public education system, it should be better.

Looking at America's workers in science, technology, engineering and math careers doesn't provide much hope, either. Women, blacks, Hispanics and American Indians are underrepresented compared to their percentage in the general population.

We need to ensure these problems are solved immediately so that future generations will have every opportunity to succeed. Recently, the College of William and Mary and the Boys and Girls Clubs Suffolk Unit took on the task of inspiring young minds.

The college put on a science fair at the Boys and Girls Club on Wednesday. But instead of requiring research and projects from the children, the fair brought the projects to them.

The children learned about how to perform CPR and the Heimlich maneuver, operated a microscope, discovered first-aid techniques, saw how various items reacted to a vacuum chamber and observed the dispersion of light.

Amy Wilkerson, the laboratory research manager at William and Mary's Applied Research Center, said the best way to make science attractive for children is to show how interesting and fun it can be.

Perhaps one of the children in attendance will grow up to be a paramedic, researcher, modeling and simulation analyst, veterinarian, botanist or mechanical engineer. That would be a reward for the science fair paying dividends long after the CPR dummies and microscopes are packed up and carried away.

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