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# The Journal News

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## Mt. Vernon students show their grasp of science at school expo

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**MOUNT VERNON** — First-grader Brian Stephenson was a bit nervous as he explained his model of the solar system, but he knew his stuff.

Stephenson pointed to the north and south ice caps on Mars and noted that Jupiter was three times the size of Earth. He also shared a new fact he learned, that Pluto was no longer considered a planet.

The student said he had fun making the project for Science Expo 2009 at his school. "I liked the painting, and the writing was my second favorite," he said.

Stephenson was among some 300 students at Lincoln Elementary School whose projects were shown in the auditorium and gymnasium yesterday as part of a two-day science fair. The event, a 25-year tradition at the school, is aimed at getting students interested in science and teaching them to create a project from start to finish.

"They enjoy it immensely and they feel such a sense of accomplishment," said Frank Naccarato, chairman of the science fair committee.

The fair was expanded this year to include students from kindergarten, first and second grade. To prepare, faculty held evening workshops with parents to talk about project-building, while others



Matthew Brown/The Journal News  
Fourth-grader Michael Joffe yesterday demonstrates his friction project at the Lincoln Elementary School Science Expo.



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helped students with their projects during lunch and after school.

All the Lincoln students made science projects and the best and most diverse were included in the fair. The others were displayed in the school's halls.

The students' work included a comparison of bacteria in the mouths of dogs and humans, measurements of spacing on CDs and DVDs using a laser pointer, and a study of mold growth in food.

Jakob Antunez experimented with memory retention using colors and gender as variables.

He was able to break it down into kid-friendly terms, explaining that the brain was

like a racetrack.

"The colored words are like a faster car. It goes around the track faster so you remember it more," said the fifth-grader.

At another table, sixth-grader Sathwik Vavilathoto explained to visiting parents that he had created a gel to separate DNA and RNA molecules, a process that is useful in crime scenes.

"In the future I plan on being a doctor, so I went online for things related to medical science," he said.

Anthony James looked at a project studying the impact of acid in milk that his stepson, Savion Campbell, had made. "Nice job," he told him, rubbing the boy's head.

"I'm so proud and glad they put this together," James said. "It's a great thing for the children."