



MathScience Innovation Center

Imagine. Create. Lead.

Contact: Martha Vogel
Tel. (804) 343-6525 Ext 231
Email: mvogel@msinnovation.info

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 2008

3 METRO RICHMOND SCIENCE FAIR STUDENTS SELECTED AS NATIONAL SEMIFINALISTS FOR THE SSP MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

The MathScience Innovation Center is pleased to announce that three Junior Division winners from the 2008 Metro Richmond Science Fair were selected as National Semifinalists in the SSP Middle School Program.

Layla Abi-Falah
Moody Middle School (Henrico)
Project: The Effect of a Coronal Mass Ejection's Position in Relation to the Sun on Its Velocity

Arius Aibara
Manchester Middle School (Chesterfield)
Project: Turbulence and Wing Shape

Sam Wojcicki
Powhatan Junior High School (Powhatan)
Project: Finding the Energy Solution: The Effect of Enclosing a Windmill in a Tunnel on the Energy Produced at Different Speeds

Each year the Metro Richmond Science Fair, which is sponsored by the MathScience Innovation Center, nominates its First and Second Place winners in the Junior Division to the SSP Middle School Program. The SSP is a national competition for students in grades five through eight.

Once nominated, the students complete an entry form which is sent, along with their science project paper, to the headquarters of the Society for Science and the Public, the organization which administers the competition. SSP and their judges select 300 students nationwide to advance to the semifinals. From the semifinalists, thirty finalists will be chosen to win an all expense paid trip to

Washington DC in October, 2008. The finalists will be announced on September 17, 2008.

The SSP Middle School Program Finalists will have the opportunity to present their original science project to judges and the public at the Marian Koshland Science Museum of the National Academy of Sciences. They will then compete in team science challenges for over \$40,000 in prizes, trips and scholarships.

This year's semifinalists were selected from 1,943 entrants representing 253 affiliated science fairs across the United States and Puerto Rico. The 300 semifinalists represent 42 states and Puerto Rico and include 177 males and 123 females. The Metro Richmond winners were three of five students selected from Virginia.

Elizabeth Marincola, president of Society for Science & the Public, said, "These talented young scientists are already stepping up to meet the great scientific challenges of tomorrow. Their work will have a real impact on generations to come and reaffirms the vision of Society for Science & the Public to inform, educate, and inspire the world around us."

Since 1942, the science education programs of Society for Science & the Public (SSP), including the Intel Science Talent Search (originally the Westinghouse) and the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair have produced future winners of the world's most prestigious scientific and academic honors. Former finalists of SSP programs have gone on to win the Nobel Prize, the Fields Medal, the National Medal of Science, and MacArthur Foundation Fellowships.

Director of Education Programs for SSP, Michele Glidden, said of the semifinalists and their selection process, "Our evaluators and judges were amazed by the caliber of research these students achieved. This year's semifinalists, and their teachers and parents, are truly to be commended."

The MathScience Innovation Center is a 42-year-old organization dedicated to futuristic math and science education for K-12 teachers and students. Its vision for 2015 focuses on implementing new programs in fractal geometry, engineering, nanotechnology, environmental modeling, and distance learning. The MathScience Innovation Center is an educational consortium comprised of eight school divisions: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Hanover, Henrico, King William, Petersburg, Powhatan, and Richmond. Other divisions also participate through abbreviated memberships: Charles City, Hopewell, Prince George, and the Steward School.