

AWIS-PHL Participates in SCIWorks 2011 at the Da Vinci Science Center

Catherine Moorwood, D.Phil.

AWIS-PHL is always keen to promote science to the next generation of women and to the wider public, so we were delighted when the Da Vinci Center in Allentown asked us to partner with them to put on a one-day, interactive public event that would showcase women in science. Women in Science Day took place on May 7, as part of Wells Fargo Women in Science Week, within the Da Vinci Center's SCIWorks 2011, an annual event celebrating the pursuit of science.

The AWIS-PHL effort was spearheaded by Jill Yersak and Lisa Ambrose-Lanci, who recruited a team of volunteers* to run science experiments for kids and take part in a panel discussion on their careers in science. While most of the volunteers were members of AWIS-PHL, news had spread far and wide and we were delighted to welcome additional local scientists who wanted to help out. Jill and Lisa were ably supported by Karen Knecht, Director of Education and Exhibits at the Da Vinci Center.

Hands-on activities included building circuits, learning about phases using dry ice and liquid nitrogen, investigating taste buds, testing the pH of different drinks and observing *Drosophila* under a microscope. Young visitors to the Da Vinci Center embarked upon their research with great enthusiasm! This was also an opportunity for parents to see how much fun their kids had doing science, and for children and adults alike to be presented with a positive image of women in science.

A diverse group of women with different scientific backgrounds and at different stages of their careers took part in the panel discussion. A small audience stimulated a thought-provoking conversation on topics ranging from the pace of scientific progress, the pros and cons of genetically modified food, the differences between scientists and medical doctors and the status of women in science today.

The Da Vinci Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing stimulating interactive experiences of science to children and adults of all ages. The Center works with local schools to provide science-oriented field trips and workshops, and also features an extensive hands-on exhibit floor that is open for exploration and discovery by the public.

Women in Science Day was a great success, and we would welcome further opportunities to work with the Da Vinci Center in support of our shared goals of engaging local communities, raising the profile of women in science and providing inspiration to the next generation of scientists.

See photos below.

*Volunteers

Jill Yersak (organizer)

Lisa Ambrose-Lanci (organizer)

Panelists:

Alice Marcy

Catherine Moorwood

Sophie Beyer

Jillian Scavone

Christine Dueh

Hands On Experiments:

Liquid Crystals: Edna Martinez and Mary Varughese

Acid/Base Solutions: Joyce Lane-Morrow and Anna Pavlovskaya

Taste: Sneha Narasimha and Folami Ideraabdullah

Phases of Matter: Julia Lehman, Reeteka Sud, and Juni Banerjee

Microscope demo: Danielle Snowflack, Johanna Jasinski, Christine Macolino









