



Victoria Sandoval examines specimens with a microscope during Collegedale Academy's STEAM Expo on March 28, 2023. The expo included a presentation by NASA scientist Joby Minor and highlighted STEAM projects by students of all ages—from 3-year-olds all the way up to teenage seniors.

COLLEGEDALE ACADEMY HOSTS COMMUNITY STEAM EXPO

On March 28, 2023, Collegedale Academy (CA) hosted a successful STEAM Expo celebrating the fields of science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. The night featured two events: a presentation by NASA scientist Joby Minor and a display afterward of student STEAM projects.

The night began in the high school auditorium as keynote speaker Joby Minor shared insights into the future of space exploration and discussed recent scientific advances. Minor worked in 2015 with astronauts on the International Space Station as the payload operations manager for NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Ala. He told the attending parents, students, and community members that NASA's next goal is long-term lunar exploration, through the Artemis program, to prepare for eventual human exploration of Mars.

After Minor's talk, attendees moved into the gymnasium, which featured creations from the youngest students enrolled in CA's Early Childhood Education Center all the way up to its nearly graduating high school seniors. The projects on display from various STEAM-related classes gave family and friends an insight into the intelligent and creative minds of these students.

Elementary and middle school displays included toy designs, robotics, and blacklight paintings. The

seventh-graders exhibited their scale projects, with re-creations of items such as Rubik's cubes, video-game controllers, and even a scaled-down version of Selena Trott's 7th-grade math classroom.

Visitors also enjoyed the variety of high school STEAM projects, such as the birthday polynomial project from Algebra II students and the marble run tracks made by physics students out of index cards and tape. In addition to CA's science and math initiatives, this year's event included dressers made in woodshop class, light bulb-themed sculptures from the senior Bible class, and interactive elements such as spin painting by National Honor Art Society members.

A highlight of the expo was the infinity room, a small room filled with mirrors that was inspired by Yayoi Kusama's infinity room and designed by middle school and high school art teacher Beth Stone. Southern Adventist University staff also participated in the evening event, sharing with students emerging technology, such as a life-size jumping robotic dog.

"STEAM night was successful, with a packed gym and many informed minds," shares Nicki Johnson, CA's director of innovation. "It really goes to show the talent, brilliance, and creativity of CA students at all ages. Supporting new STEAM programs and continuing to show up for events such as this one are all ways the community can help these young minds continue to thrive."

Sarah Andrews is a student at Collegedale Academy and a member of the Class of 2023.