

Marsh White Report

**Society of Physics Students – California State University Sacramento
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Overview of Activities

Skylab is a school that was designed to educate the formerly homeless at an ex-military base near California State University Sacramento (CSUS) that has been converted to project homes. Skylab is a youth production studio where students can get help on homework, obtain one-on-one mentoring/tutoring and be involved in special projects. The goal is to teach them what they need to know to be able to function in society as well as try to raise interest and confidence to attend college. As recipients of the Marsh W. White award, the CSUS chapter of the Society of Physics Students (SPS) has played an active role in bringing the excitement of physics into the hearts and minds of the children.

The CSUS chapter of SPS has engaged these students in various demonstrations and activities encouraging the importance and excitement of learning physics. Every Friday, a small group of SPS students (2-4) travel to the Skylab and administer various contests and demonstrations that have proven to drive excitement and curiosity of physics.

In the short time that the CSUS chapter of SPS has been involved with the Skylab, there have been a liquid nitrogen experiment day (including liquid nitrogen ice cream), a rocket building/launching contest, an airplane building and flying contest, a solar lab where the sun was observed through a telescope and an electricity and magnetism lab including a Van DeGraff generator to name a few. The success of "Physics Friday" can be seen from the large increase of students that now look forward to coming home from school and engaging in exciting physics experiments each Friday. At the end of the day, the children are always asking what to expect the following week and why we can not stay longer. Some common quotes are, "Whoa! How'd you do that!" and, "Can I try it next?!"

The directors of the Skylab continue to be very enthusiastic about what we have been doing for the kids. We have agreed to come back next school year and continue our efforts. A large list of experiments and demonstrations has been created to keep us busy over the next year.

Also, a small booklet has been created that contains various “at home” physics experiments. It is a piece of work that will always be under production and will be distributed to the children in order to bring physics to their homes and to the Skylab on other days of the week other than Friday. It is our hope that this booklet may be distributed at all of our outreach events and possibly taken to local elementary schools.

Overall, the kids have learned to smile and enjoy physics. It has been our goal to utilize the children’s open and eager minds to show them that science can be not only fun, but a rewarding knowledgeable experience as well. It is for this reason that the CSUS chapter of SPS has put in over 100 man-hours of community service during the current semester alone.

Expenditures

Funds from the Marsh White Award have been used for various prizes for the various contests. It has also been spent on various supplies for the contests and demonstrations such as ingredients for liquid nitrogen ice cream and the egg drop contest. Some funds have been saved for the printing of the at-home experiment book which will be distributed during the Fall semester. The club currently has just under \$100 left for future activities.