

Marsh White Award

The Pennsylvania State University

Superhero Training Academy – Exploration Day 2009

April 18th, 2009

Penn State's SPS chapter hosted its second-annual set of physics-themed stations at the College of Science and Pennsylvania Space Grant-sponsored Exploration Day on April 18th. With a theme of a "superhero training academy", students, mainly in grades 1-8, went through a series of eight physics-themed stations in an attempt to learn how to utilize their superhero powers.

Students learned how to generate electrical energy (bike connected to light bulbs), freeze their enemies (liquid nitrogen), speed through the air (kid-sized hovercraft), and more, mimicking the powers of well-known superheroes associated with the stations. Those who completed all eight stations were given a certificate of completion, as well as a prize for their efforts.

The event, held in a gymnasium at the university, drew approximately 2500 people; out of these, ~650 children completed the stations. This more than tripled the number from the previous year due to increased advertisement, and meant that SPS members were constantly busy over the five-hour time-frame. At the event, students also participated in other activities, from planetarium shows, to meeting an astronaut, to hopping onboard a model space shuttle.

Penn State's SPS chapter intends to continue its themed stations at next year's Exploration Day event, and hopes to expand its volunteer force from ~20 SPS members to accommodate the increasing influx of children. It also hopes to better integrate its activities with badges for Boy and Girl Scouts, which were an afterthought of the Exploration Day supervisors for this occasion.

Expenses:

Prizes: ~\$250

Flowers: \$60

Hovercraft materials: \$140

Copies: \$50





