Experiments test budding scientists' theories

Marcus Haven explains which elements rust first in water. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It's possible many of the adults in the room were not smarter than a first-grader – at least on Friday.

Pink volcanoes, bottles of unknown substances, melting candy and crayons. Rows of tables with trifold cardboard displays explain what all of this is about.

"We wanted them to *do* science," Shaina Lucas told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Why shouldn't first-graders be able to do projects?"

Lucas is the first-grade teacher at Bijou Community School who last year started what is now an annual science fair.

Students worked on their projects for five weeks, focusing on

a question and hypothesis. All last week they presented their experiments to their classmates, explaining the question they were asking, and then conducted the experiment or showed the finished product.

The culmination was Nov. 14 when they all had to answer questions for parents, staff and other adults.

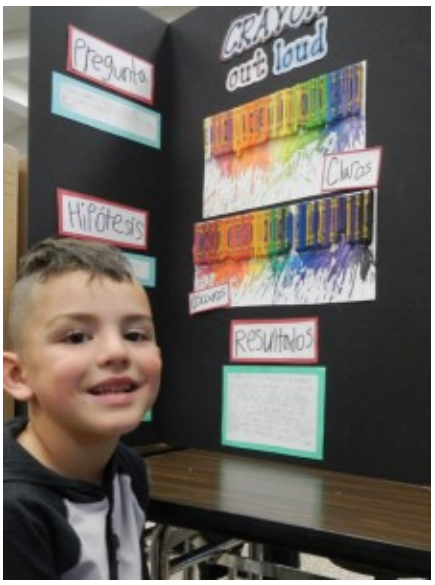
Bijou first-graders show off their science experiments Nov. 14.

“I thought the steel and aluminum would rust first,” Marcus Haven told *Lake Tahoe News*. His reasoning was “those were two metals.”

The steel was rusting after having been in water four days.

Marcus put glass, galvanized steel, aluminum, copper, wood, steel and plastic in water to see which would rust first.

Others asked questions about oil and water, and what happens when distilled water is mixed with baking soda.



Kayden Morales tests the speed at which crayon colors melt.

Kayden Morales wanted to find out if different color crayons melt at the same rate. They don’t. Lighter colors melt faster.

He used a blow dryer to test his theory.

He and his mom correctly predicted the outcome, while his dad and sister thought the darker colors would melt faster.

For Krystal Octavo it was all about finding the M&M that melts the fastest. The first test was to put six colors on her palm, the second to hold them while making a fist. Both times the brown one melted first.

For students who are in the two-way immersion program they had to present their experiments in Spanish.