

# SCIENCE BUDDIES *in Action*



## Student

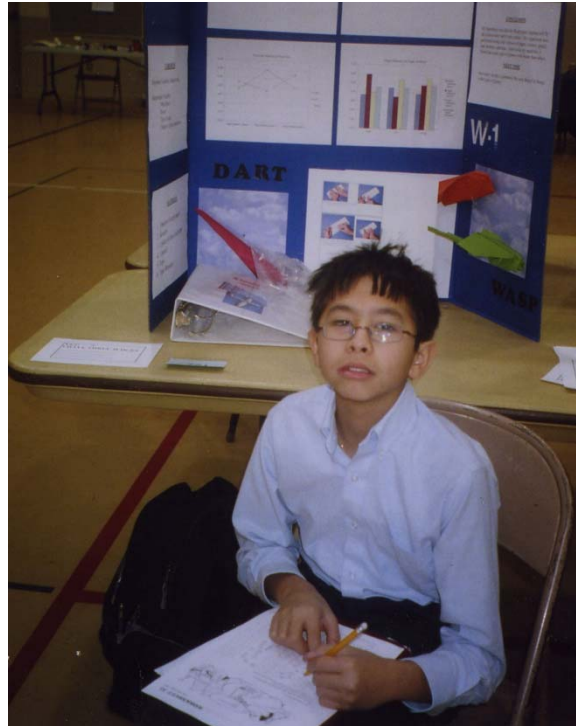
Gabriel Stroup  
Salt Lake City, Utah

## Summary

7<sup>th</sup> grader Gabriel (Gabe) Stroup returned from Christmas vacation to discover he had to completely redo his science fair project. With the help of his teacher, mother, and Science Buddies, Gabriel was able to find a science project he liked and successfully complete it—all within 2 weeks!

## Overview

Gabe Stroup had been working hard on his science fair project, a report on human evolution. When he returned from a vacation in Guam, however, he was surprised to learn that he had a new science teacher, Mrs. Nelsen. Gabe was even more surprised when Mrs. Nelsen told him that although his project was a good science paper, it was not an experiment. He would have to redo everything. “I sympathized with him and asked him to return to my room later that morning,” recalled Mrs. Nelsen. “He was so discouraged. I quickly checked [Science Buddies’] website for ideas. After visiting with him, I found that he was very interested in flight and loved to make paper airplanes. We went on the website and found lots of info on paper airplanes.”



Mrs. Nelsen called Gabriel’s mother on a Saturday to tell her Gabe had found a project about paper airplanes that he seemed excited about and asked her to help Gabe. Armed with a new project, Gabe set to work, with the help of Science Buddies and a very dedicated mother. Gabe spent the rest of Saturday working on his project. Sunday was spent designing his experiment, which meant testing several different paper airplane designs to see which ones would fly the farthest. First, he and his mother talked about needing to control variables, like the force with which Gabe threw the airplane. They also did background research, talking about different factors that can affect flight. Then he started testing his airplanes. At first, he threw each airplane once, but there was so much variation that his mother suggested Gabe try throwing each one three times and taking the average.

Fortunately, Gabe and his mother were not alone in their endeavor to engineer the perfect paper airplane. “Having the paper airplane designs already available on Science Buddies made things so much easier,” Ms. Stroup said. “Gabe only had to pick which ones he wanted to use. It made doing the project much faster.” Because of Science Buddies’ resources, Gabe was able to do a science fair project with less frustration and he had more fun. “I was excited about it,” shared Gabe.

Gabe and his mom worked together on his project feverishly, and completed all but the display board by Monday.

When all was said and done, Gabe's paper airplane project earned an 'A' grade and Honorable Mention at the school science fair. Gabe also qualified to advance to the next level of science fairs. "His smile was priceless!" Mrs. Nelsen shared. "That is a success story."

Gabe has definite plans for his future: he hopes to go to college and graduate with a PhD in Zoology and Ecology. Gabe says that he has liked animals for as long as he can remember. Ms. Stroup noted that Gabe's passion for science started when he first became interested in dinosaurs at age two and has stuck with him ever since. In his spare time, Gabe likes to read and play video games. "But I would like to see more animals than I usually do," he adds.

With so much drive and passion, there is no doubt that Gabe will go far.