

SCIENCE BUDDIES in Action



Student

Allison Murray
Rydal, Pennsylvania

Awards

School science fair, 1st Place in Physical Sciences Division

Overview

Who says art and science don't mix? Not multitalented 8th grader Allison Murray, who, with the help of Science Buddies, combined her interest in both to succeed in her school's science fair.



Allison originally discovered Science Buddies from her science teacher, who had students use the Topic Selection Wizard to find ideas for their science projects. After completing the survey, Allison was led to the Project Idea "Keeping You in Suspens(ion)," which asks students to compare the strength of beam bridges vs. suspension bridges. Allison modified the project by taking the bridges outside to expose them to the elements. She named her project "Keeping You in Suspen(sions): From Land to Shining Land." Ultimately, she discovered that while suspension bridges can hold more weight because their cables provide extra support, beam bridges are more aerodynamic and are thus able to withstand inclement weather.

Once her project was completed, Allison also used the "Science Fair Project Display Boards" section of the Project Guide to help her communicate her results for the science fair. When the day of the science fair arrived, Allison says her preparation helped alleviate the jitters.

"I wasn't that nervous," she says. "I was pretty confident with the project and the effort I put into it."

Allison's efforts paid off; she won first place in the physical sciences division, and was eligible to compete in the county fair. She plans to compete in science fairs in the future, and says the experience was fun and educational.

"After I finished the experiment, I enjoyed using my research to draw conclusions about why the bridges behaved the way they did", she says. "I also liked thinking about ways to modify the project and relate it to the real world."

Allison is particularly interested in engineering and architecture because she likes "inventing and coming up with designs which could help people in everyday life." In addition, she likes learning about World War II, playing squash, sewing, and spending time with friends and family.