

**International Harlem Science Street Fair & Festival hosted by
Harlem Children Society**

***Bringing Scientific Awareness to the Streets of
Harlem in New York, Polacca in Arizona and
Montreal in Canada***

In an effort to bring sciences and creating scientific awareness in our communities more directly and therefore having a direct impact – the ‘International Harlem Science Street Fair & Festival’ was held by the ‘Harlem Children Society’ on October 7 from 11am – 4pm in Harlem in New York City. This is the third such fair being held in partnership with Sigma Xi Scientific Research Society and Salem United Methodist Church, and showcases the hands-on research of high school and undergraduate students from these communities. The fair promotes access to education in under-served and under-represented communities by bringing the sciences directly to the urban streets of Harlem, New York. Featured experiments, based in the sciences, engineering, mathematics and medicine, employ a unique combination of fundamental principles found in both the sciences and the arts. *The Aim of the Fair is to bring the sciences directly to the streets of our neighborhoods (especially the under-resourced and under-represented) and allow for proper dissemination of knowledge. This unique venture is also aimed at encouraging, fostering and furthering a dialogue in the different health, environmental and other pertinent issues concerning the masses.* An enterprise for generating hope and for arming communities with scientific knowledge, the Science Street Fair and Festival represents the interns’ growing ability to connect their work in science - Medicine, Engineering and Mathematics, with the interests and problems of their communities. This involvement with under-resourced neighborhoods - through both the Internship Program and the Street Fair – represents a kind of experiment aimed at stimulating the development of human capital and social entrepreneurship within them.

This year, for the first time ever, sister fairs were held concurrently, on the same date, at the same time, in both Arizona's Hopi Reservation and Montreal, Canada. Hopi Satellite HCS Health Fair was held in conjunction with the Tuhisma Art Festival and Market held at the Hopi Veterans Memorial Center on Saturday. The Tuhisma Art Festival is the largest Hopi specific art festival in the Southwest and draws the finest Hopi artisans. Visitors and buyers travel from around the world to attend. Many people from Hopi were there that day. The art festival provided an ideal background to the science based poster boards and presentations that were a part of the health fair. McGill University student researchers presented their work to the public at the Ecomuseum, 2125 Chemin Sainte-Marie, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue.

All three events were broadcast live, electronically, across the country and internationally. Additionally, the fair honored various outreach programs that aid youth in under-served, under-represented communities and school districts in New York City; Jersey City and Camden, New Jersey; the Navajo and Hopi Reservations in Arizona; Detroit; Tennessee; and Florida. This fair keeps the dream alive – both in Harlem and, now, across state and international borders – that science can be fun and exciting and that all children are entitled to the tools and knowledge which prepare them to be successful entrepreneurs and productive world citizens. We are committed to empowering the youth of tomorrow with the skills to pursue higher education and career achievement so they can give back to their communities. It is thrilling to give the gift of hands-on learning to young people, and to see them share in the excitement of discovery. If we are able to bring science out of the academic stratosphere and give it a context, which attracts and inspires young people, we are accomplishing a great deal.

This year's fair featured both the hands-on research exhibits for which the fair is known and the Harlem Science Poster Competition. Reflecting the rich culture of these communities, the fair's entertainment program included: use of the **Image and Forum Theater** as a '**Science Theatre**' to address health, environmental and socio-economic issues affecting the masses. An all-star international musical line-up, including featuring

internationally acclaimed artists also provided entertainment in an effort to draw in the masses from the street.

There was a science poster competition by over 150 students, and attended by over 2000 people from the community. Several universities were represented at the fair to vie into luring our brightest students to their campuses. We can proudly say that the Science Fair was an immense success; and yet another successful experiment into the interaction between the scientific community and the general masses – thereby fostering a dialogue between science and society.

“The HCS goal is to nurture the seeds of tomorrow with the knowledge of today. I have made lasting bonds with other students as we worked together to achieve in our research,” says one graduate of the program. “Working with NASA opened up many fields to me. I realized I had more of an interest in space exploration, space technology, and space engineering than architecture. In helping design our hybrid rocket with my mentor, I realized that I should venture into the fields of aerospace, aeronautics, and mechanical engineering. HCS lights the way to achieving your dreams and creating a better tomorrow.”

NYC Board of Education and the city of New York has in the past honored the science street fair as one of the major science events in New York in bringing Science Education to the masses and classed the event as part of ‘Weekend of science’ by the city.

For more information on HCS and this year’s fair, visit www.HarlemChildrenSociety.org

ABOUT THE HARLEM CHILDREN SOCIETY

Since 2000, the Harlem Children Society (HCS), a nonprofit organization, has drawn upon numerous resources to foster young people’s interest and develop their talent in health, science, and engineering. HCS identifies at-risk youth in under-resourced and under-served communities and introduces them to career options in science and technology. The organization offers them the resources and opportunities they need to

explore the world and their future through science and to revitalize their communities. Students are selected based on their motivation, enthusiasm and performance at school, on recommendations from principals and science teachers, and the strength of a personal interview.

HCS' highly intensive hands-on research internship, after-school and summer "bridge" programs pair high school students (9-12) from low-income areas in the tri-state area and nationally with some of the top scientists, doctors and engineers from over 50 leading scientific and medical institutions, from Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to NASA, to work on specific projects within these fields. Students receive a handsome stipend for their work. The program is rated as one of the largest and best programs of its kind in the country. Six students from Harlem, the Bronx and Camden, New Jersey participated in one of the hallmarks of this year's internship program in rocket science and technology at the NASA Laboratories in Florida with all expenses, including research, covered by HCS.

HCS has increased enrollment from 3 students from 2 high schools guided by one mentor in 2000 to over 183 students from 50 schools, guided by over 250 mentors in 50 institutions in 2006. HCS's rate of success is exemplified in the number of former students in MD/PhD, Engineering, Nursing, Mathematics and other science programs in some of the top colleges, including Rutgers, Dartmouth, Penn State, UMDNJ, Swarthmore, Columbia, Cornell Universities, and more.