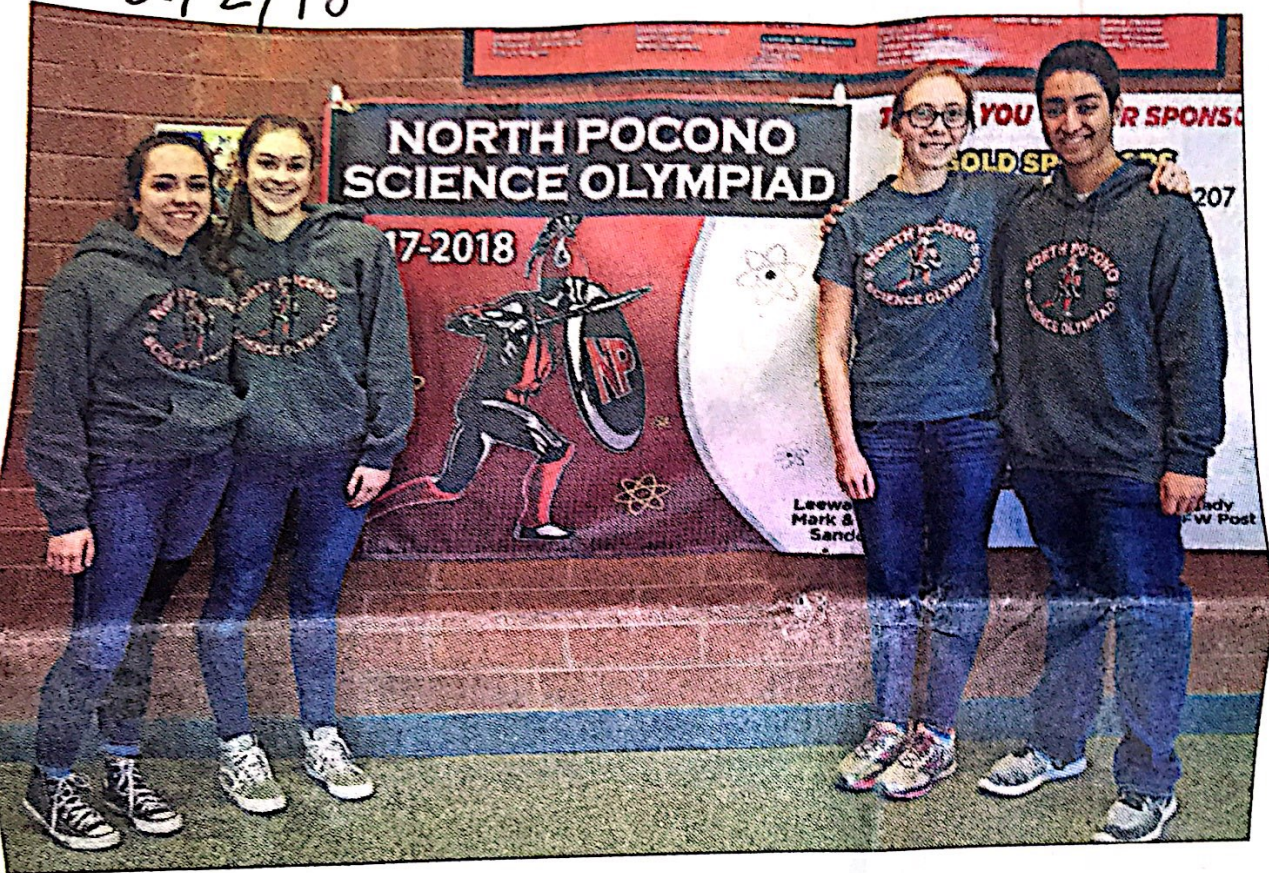


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Some of the representatives for North Pocono included Adrianna Smith, Sara Wojner, Emma Nemitz and Nikhil Patel. [PHOTO BY BRIDGET LAMONICA]

# NP hosts Science Olympiad

By Bridget LaMonica  
For The Villager

COVINGTON TWP. — Last year, North Pocono High School hosted its very first Science Olympiad Invitational, bringing in students from all over to compete in science and math related events.

This year marked the second invitational, and it has only grown ever since. Students came from schools like Hon-

esdale and Wallenpaupack, but there were also a number of students who traveled from areas as far as Ithaca, NY and Allentown.

Many North Pocono students were involved in multiple events, like senior Sara Wojner.

Wojner competed in Towers, Dynamic Planet, Chem Lab, Thermodynamics, Material Science and Optics. Her favorite is Thermody-

namics.

Wojner liked “Just getting to use what we learned in science, and apply it, especially with the building events.”

Emma Nemitz, senior, competed in Rocks and Minerals, Thermodynamics, Experimental Design and Forensics.

She plans to major in Chemistry and Business when she gets to college. For now,

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she finds real value in the competition.

"It gives you real life experience that other kids just learning in class don't get," Nemitz said.

Adrianna Smith is a senior who enjoys the life sciences, and competes in Material Science and Ecology.

"We have to work together for the greater good of the team," Smith said. "I think that's definitely what I like the best because it is so team oriented."

Junior Nikhil Patel competed in his favorite event Towers, as well as Chem Lab and Game On.

"I like the free reign we have to just explore our own stuff," Patel said. "[We] do our own thing."

He plans on eventually pursuing a STEM field after high school.

Helping to run event smoothly were alumni like Matt Smith, who is now in his first year at Elizabeth-town College, currently studying history and middle eastern studies.

During his time at North Pocono, he'd paid particular attention to the biology and ecology events.

He reflected that even though he didn't go into a STEM major in college, the program was very important to him.

"I think the skills I learned weren't so much material based," Smith said. "It was a lot more how to work with people."

Smith helped with registration and later acted as judge for one of the events he competed in last year: ecology.

Smith has seen in person how the invitational has grown, thanking the support of the school board and administration for their continued support of the STEM-based program.

A number of school board members showed their support by attending.

"If they need money for transportation or they need approval to go to some of the other invitationals, we immediately respond to that and help out in any way that we can," said school board member Mrs. Croom.

Another board member, Mrs. Cobb, added how exciting it was to see kids excited about science and learning.

The program showed just how committed North

Pocono was to academics, according to Superintendent McGraw, but it was also a testimony to the talent and work ethic of the students.

"Not only are they in high academic classes but also have to make this commitment," McGraw said. "They have longer practices than any club or activity that we have, so it's amazing."

McGraw was complimentary of the teaching duo Mrs. Lindsay Croom and Dr. J. Croom, who transformed Science Olympiad from a small program to "a state power."

Mrs. Croom loves spending time with the students and watching how excited they get over science.

"I've been a coach for ten years and to see my alumni come back to help and the parents... it's just an experience that's indescribable," Lindsay Croom said. "It's just awesome to make the kids excited about science and push them outside their boundaries and watch them excel."

Dr. J. Croom also enjoys the excitement of the scientific-minded student, but also saw another angle.

"There are kids that want to learn more about math and science and just don't have a way to express that," Dr. Croom explained. "So Science Olympiad gives them that avenue to explore a wide variety of career choices, learn about themselves and have fun doing that."

Emily Leggiero, junior and student director for the invitational, was another instrumental part in making the event run smoothly.

She made important decisions, contacted coaches from incoming schools and helped put together registration packets.

When she's not helping out at the North Pocono invitational, she's on the team herself in the Herpetology, Rocks and Minerals, and Mission Possible events.

She enjoys seeing kids from different schools come together with their different ideas to solve a problem, such as presented by the chain reaction, Rube Goldberg inspired event of Mission Possible.

"It's just kind of great to see everyone come together and do something that we love," she said.