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OC Science Showcases High School Science Research

SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, California—March 22, 2015

On March 22, OC Science hosted In Search of Excellence: High School Science Research Showcase at St Margaret's Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano. Two high-school researchers, Jennifer McCleary and Aileen Wang, each competed in the Siemens Competition and the Intel Science Talent Search (Intel STS), both prestigious science research competitions for high school seniors.

The event began with the emcee, Neah Lekan, opening with a presentation about OC Science and its mission. Dr. Jennifer Viola, the chair of the Science Department, officially welcomed the guests to St. Margaret's. Next, Prasanthi Sathyaprakash spoke about the Orange County Science and Engineering Fair (OCSEF) which will occur in April and involve students from all across Orange County in grades 6-12.

Jennifer McCleary spoke first about her project, which explored the effectiveness of solar cells, as well as her experiences as an Intel STS Finalist, one of only 40 each year. Aileen Wang presented next about her research in the early detection of breast cancer, inspired by her aunt's late diagnosis. Both achieved success as Jennifer was able to improve solar panel efficiency and Aileen was able to create a more accurate algorithm for breast cancer detection. One middle school volunteer said, "Both speakers were clear in the explanation of their topics." The event continued with a Q&A session where both the researchers and our volunteers answered questions about high school science research. OC Science closed the event with a final presentation about OC Science and Engineering Week, which will occur the week of April 20-26 and feature interactive science events for elementary and middle school students. OC Science Board Member Sherry Xu stated that she hopes to see many passionate young researchers participating on April 25th during the Elementary Science Olympiad Invitational and Junior Engineering Olympiad. The event concluded at 5:00 PM, leaving inspired students brainstorming about next year's science research topics.

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