

Students show off talents at symposium



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Students from Orlando and Fort Myers look on as Daniil Shabashvil shows them how one of the machines in the lab works in the Academic Research Building.

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Published: Tuesday, February 3, 2009 at 6:01 a.m.

Last Modified: Monday, February 2, 2009 at 10:54 p.m.

Potential Gators got the chance to display their talents at the 46th Annual Junior Science, Engineering and Humanities Symposium, held in the Reitz Union Sunday and Monday.

The symposium gives Florida high school students and teachers the chance to practice their research and presentation skills while visiting University of Florida laboratories, said Deborah Paulin, the assistant director at the UF Center for Pre-Collegiate Education and Training.

The symposium is mostly for college-bound students who are interested in science, medicine, engineering and psychology.

Paulin said 22 junior and senior high school students competed for college scholarships by presenting their scientific research and posters to be judged by 26 UF faculty members. Freshman and sophomore high school students also submitted their scientific findings, but not for scholarships.

"This gives them practice to see how it feels to compete and present research, and it's a great forum to practice presentation skills," Paulin said. "We want to promote the youth to do research and expand their horizons in terms of research opportunities."

Two presentations included speeches on treatments for breast cancer and leukemia by sophomores Alan Marcus and Cynthia Mahesh of Lake Brantley High School in Altamonte Springs.

Marcus and Mahesh said they enjoyed touring some of the UF laboratories.

"It's just amazing that they opened up all of these labs for us," Marcus said. "We actually get to experience the scientific field hands-on instead of only reading about it."

The UF Symphony Orchestra provided the humanities portion Monday night.

The symposium also included guest speakers Jeffrey Kleim, associate professor of neuroscience research, Lucia Notterpek, the new chair of the department of neuroscience, and Fred Gregory, history of science professor. An award luncheon will be held today for the 240 students and teachers.

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