

Chemistry students team up to teach children importance of science

By [Wade Rupard](#) on Oct 25, 2015 at 12:30 a.m.



Danika Campbell giggles as UND Chemistry Club member Juan Beltran demonstrates vitamin c redox using iodine at Chemistry Fun Day at UND for second through fourth graders Saturday. photo by Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald

Tanner Bryant's eyes lit up as he saw the flame change color.

The third-grader sat in amazement during a chemistry experiment where chemicals were sprayed into a flame to change the flame's color.

"That was so cool," he said. "I didn't know fire could do that."

Tanner and more than 45 youngsters took part in UND's annual Chemistry Fun Day put on by the undergraduate Chemistry Club.

The children, who were in grades 2-4, spent two hours rotating through stations that taught them various chemistry philosophies. Students participated in a skit where they acted as molecules, observed a liquid nitrogen and dry ice experiment, and learned the Law of Conservation of Mass by measuring popcorn kernels before and after they were popped to show they had the same weight.

Julie Abrahamson, an assistant professor of chemistry at UND and the organizer of the event, said the event has been a major success over the years. She said she had to turn some families away this year because they didn't have enough equipment to accommodate everyone.

UND students helped the children along the way, performing experiments alongside them throughout the day.

"I think the UND students have just as much fun as the kids so," Abrahamson said.

Ellie Swenson, a pre-med student, said the day is designed to get elementary students interested in science, something she said is becoming more and more rare.

"We hope things like that will make them ask the question, 'Why?'" she said.

Swenson was part of the group that taught students popcorn will weigh the same before it's popped as a kernel as it will after it's popped as popcorn.

"We understand the Law of Conservation of Mass, but to see somebody who didn't and then teach them see them understand it, is really cool," she said.



Frank Rugh uses a balloon, dry ice and liquid nitrogen for a demonstration at Chemistry Fun Day Saturday at UND.
photo by Eric Hylden/Grand Forks Herald