

Freshmen show projects at annual LIFE Fest

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2:17 p.m., Dec. 12, 2006--More than 1,700 freshmen representing 94 clusters filled the Bob Carpenter Center on Dec. 7 for UD's seventh annual LIFE Fest, a juried poster session in which freshmen in the University's LIFE Program display academic projects they've been working on throughout the semester.



These UD students collected baseball equipment for use by children in Latin American nations.

LIFE, an acronym for Learning Integrated Freshman Experience, is an academic program for freshmen in which they form "clusters," or small learning communities, organized around themed coursework and related out-of-class experiences. Throughout the semester, these clusters work on projects created from their shared knowledge.

This year's projects ran the gamut from a diversity theme that took students to Ellis Island, the Statue of Liberty and Ground Zero to a group that constructed its own computer and software.

In *Burgundy vs. Biker*, a criminal justice cluster in which students took a scene from the movie *Anchorman* in which a biker kills anchorman, Ron Burgundy's dog during a traffic dispute, and broke the scene down into various crimes--road rage, assault, theft, animal cruelty, reckless endangerment, reckless driving--then tracked the identification, investigation, charge and adjudication of those crimes through the law enforcement system. Ian Booz, a pre-med student, said it was fun to do and "it was interesting to actually go through the court and law enforcement process."

Students Home Plate is Where the Heart Is business and economics cluster donned baseball uniforms and displayed some of the equipment they'd spent the semester gathering. They will be sending the lightly used baseball equipment to children in Latin American nations. They first found an organization called Roberto's Kids that would ship the equipment, then, with the help of the city of Newark and the Newark American Little League, they began collecting it. The Newark American Little League also donated baseball shirts.

Ravi Gupta, a senior economics and communication major, is peer mentor for the cluster. He said the 21 students found out there was an organization that sends sports equipment to Latin American countries and, with the help of the Newark community, they collected more than 80 pounds of equipment.

At the end of the two-hour session, Meghan Biery, Center for Teaching Effectiveness program coordinator, announced the poster session winners.

In the Best Use of Research category, the winner was the biological sciences cluster, mentored by Megan Fernandes, a senior arts and sciences major, for its research into the Galapagos Islands. In the Best Benefit to the Community category, two psychology clusters, mentored by Chris Davis and Lara Goldstein, junior psychology majors, won for their joint efforts in volunteering to staff the America's Walk for Diabetes that took place in Washington, D.C., Nov. 4. And for Best Real World Application, the computer and information sciences cluster, mentored by Kathleen Costello, a senior business and economics major, won for building a computer and developing its software.

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