

Ten Years of Science Quest

SQ Hosts YES/VACC Summer Meetings in Honor of Anniversary

In honor of its tenth anniversary, Science Quest has had the honour of hosting the national YES-VACC (Youth Engineering & Science Virtual Adventures Camps Canada) summer meetings here in Kingston. Science Quest shares its 10th birthday with the fifth birthday of YES-VACC. Held July 21st to 26th, the conference was a spectacular success.

The first camp of its kind in Canada, Science Quest began as a project of two undergraduate engineers (Jennifer Howard and Miye Kadonaga, now Miye Cox). These two women wanted to give kids a chance to get interested and excited about science before they decided that it was 'too hard' or 'just for geeks'. Uncertain of what the response would be from local children and parents, they resolutely pushed forward with their dream. They were met with astounding success. Even with

increasing the number of spaces available in the middle of registration, their young camp filled to capacity in its very first year. Jennifer ran the camp again the following summer, and filled every space in the camp on the first day of registration. The successes of these women set a tone of always pushing forward that continues to motivate Science Quest today. Ten years later, Science Quest has blossomed into a nationwide organization (YES-VACC) with 26 member camps across Canada, and a national magazine (YES Mag).

As the founding member of YES-VACC, it was fitting that Queen's host the summer meetings. The meetings saw the coming together of the Directors and delegates of all twenty-six member camps. In the words of the YES-VACC National Coordinators Jennifer Flanagan and Jason Côté, "The conference is about re-establishing our shared vision as a



From left to right: Miye Cox, Gunar Penikis, and Jennifer Howard. The three original Directors of Science Quest standing on the steps of Jackson Hall ten years ago.

National community and putting this vision into a realistic action plan for the future." As well as discussing the

continued on page 7

Science Quest Reaches More Young Canadians than Ever Before

Amidst all the hubbub caused by the national conference, Science Quest has spent the summer doing what it does best: bringing science to the minds of young Canadians. Following months of preparation during second term, Science Quest's intrepid instructors spent two months heading all over southern Ontario visiting school classrooms. The second half of the summer was spent bringing young scientists- and engineers-to-be onto campus for a week-long adventure into science.

For the first half of the summer, Science Quest ran a series of

classroom workshop presentations. The eight instructors traveled to new elementary schools every day all over Eastern Ontario. Children in these lucky classes get a chance to be 'Young Engineers in Training' (YETs) as they use their problem-solving skills to build a bridge, a mechanical arm to transport a satellite, an unsinkable boat or a bungee-jumping apparatus. They also get to build a cool take-home project and witness an amazing demonstration. In May and June Science Quest completed over 290 workshops, reaching more than 8500 children.

In other activities, Science Quest was

present at the much-awaited Queen's University Spring Fling a weekend of fun and reuniting for returning alumni and their children. Amid all the other exciting activities, Science Quest presented a Family Workshop in Miller Hall. They were also invited by the Quinte Chapter of the PEO to present a workshop at a barbecue for its members and their children. It was an afternoon filled with fun for participants, but most especially for instructors faced for the first time with real engineers trying out their workshop challenges.

The summer camp program has gone exceptionally well. In response to

continued on page 7

Charitable Works Cleans Up

This article appeared in the May 30th 1998 Newsmakers column of the Kingston Whig Standard. Article and photo appear courtesy of Jack Chiang of the Whig Standard

Adozen Queen's University engineering students are helping local seniors clean up their yards today.

Kelly Oakley, chairwoman of the Engineering Society's Charitable Works Committee, co-ordinates the cleanup.

She has just completed her third year and is working for the summer at the Ministry of Transportation on Counter Street. Her hometown is Barrie.

"We decided that it would be a good idea to get out in the community. We did it last Saturday with three volunteers for two hours in the morning. [Today], we have 12 volunteers," she said.

The original plan was to clean up the area within walking distance of Queen's and downtown, since some students don't own a car, but today someone will drive a few students to Gananoque to do some work there.



Kelly Oakley, Sci '99

During the summer, Oakley is working in the department overseeing the expansion of Highway 416 between Prescott and Ottawa, a project scheduled to be completed by the fall of 1999. She said she does mostly office and clerical work, with some minor engineering work.

YES/VACC Conference a Success

continued from page 3

future direction of the national organization, much of the conference was spent sharing ideas and innovations from one camp to another. The week was concluded with a closing banquet in celebration of the two birthdays. Jennifer and Miye, the original Directors of Science Quest, were guests at the Banquet and spoke of the first days of the camp. The night was concluded with a slideshow of the first ten years of Science Quest.

The conference was a time of coming together for work and productivity, but also a celebration of the fruits of grass-roots initiative. YES/VACC as a national organization came into being as a direct result of the local initiatives of those like Miye and Jennifer. Amidst discussions of strategies and plans, an awareness of this heritage and of the simple idea that spawned it was foremost in the minds of the delegates. In the words of Moe Poirier, the Chair of the Board of YES/VACC, "At the core of everything that we have achieved, there is a simple promise to help young Canadians experience the world of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics." This promise, made by Miye and Jennifer ten years ago, is being kept by hundreds of university students to thousands of kids every day.

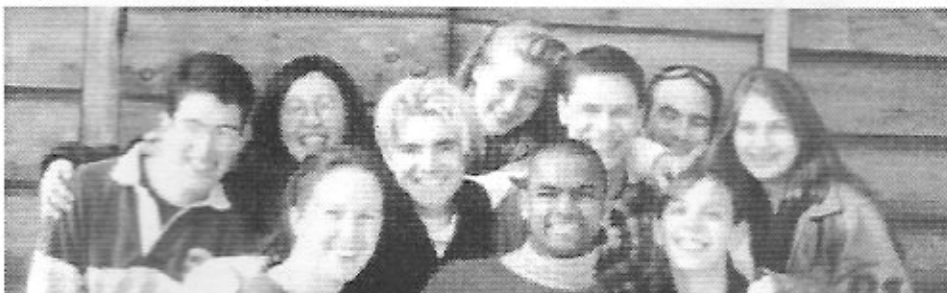
Science Quest brings Science to Kids

continued from page 3

numerous requests from parents and campers in 1997, Science Quest offered distinct 'A' and 'B' sessions so that campers may attend Science Quest for two weeks without repeating. Again this year, a 'satellite camp' was conducted on location in Brockville on July 27-31, and was a great success.

Campers have looked at everything from paleontology to aviation; from parabolic heaters that use the sun to melt a gummy bear to building a cradle out of straws and tape for an egg to protect it from an earth-quake (or reasonable equivalent, like dropping it off the roof!). At the same time,

campers get exposed to different parts of Queen's University through facility tours and shows. At the end of the week, parents are invited to come and play with their children, and witness the amazing Queen's geyser! (A small amount of liquid nitrogen in a pop bottle, sealed, and quickly immersed in a garbage can of water. The nitrogen flash boils, expands to four hundred times its size, and BOOM!!! Don't try this at home, kids).



Science Quest 1998 Instructors and Directors

This summer saw many new projects and initiatives for Science Quest, and the instructors are already excited about the potential for innovation for next summer.