

## Students set future in motion

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An activity using balloon-powered cars has helped accelerate the engineering skills of fifth-graders at Windsor Hill Elementary School.

Over a six-week span, engineers and educators have joined forces to help drive student interest in math and science through a hands-on activity in which students design, develop and test small toy cars propelled by balloons.

The program, titled "A World In Motion," culminated June 8 with the JetToy Olympics, during which teams of students put their cars through five different competitions to test the speed and accuracy of the vehicles they worked so hard to build over the past several weeks.

Sprawled across the floor of the school's multi-purpose room, the children discussed strategies, tweaked their cars and watched the other teams perform.

The program, which is sponsored by the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE), teaches students perseverance and the value of hard work, said Anne-Marie Wilcox, Windsor Hill teacher.

"They learn how to work as a team and that it's acceptable to make mistakes," Wilcox said. "It's fun to watch the children grow and succeed."

Since 1990, more than 4 million students across the country and Canada have participated in A World In Motion, according to the SAE website.

Many of the Windsor Hill students were not extremely eager to take part in the program initially, but changed their minds shortly thereafter, said Kentrel Clement, Windsor Hill teacher.

"At first they were not that into it because they thought it would be too easy," Clement said. "After testing their (first) car, however, they realized there are a lot of steps they must follow in order to be successful."

Although the JetToy Olympics were a competition and a chance for the students to showcase their newly acquired engineering talents, the teams supported each other and cheered when another squad excelled at a particular event.

The activity makes what the students learn in class more applicable, said Gene Cowen, a product engineer with Bosch Corporation and program volunteer.

"It helps the students think in ways they're not used to about the topics that they're being taught," Cowen said. "We hope it excites the kids and enhances their learning."

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**Michael Tannebaum/Journal Scene**  
Windsor Hill fifth-grader Collin Bright sizes up a balloon-powered car that he and his classmates constructed.



**Michael Tannebaum/Journal Scene**  
From left: Windsor Hill fifth-graders Curttenses Jones, Natalie Proveaux and Courtney Green take part in a hands-on engineering activity.



**Michael Tannebaum/Journal Scene**  
Windsor Hill student Nicole Alberts eyes her target as she prepares to launch a JetToy car.