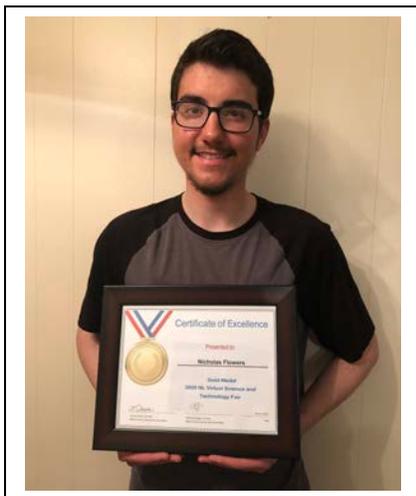


Hopedale student wins the very first NL Virtual Science and Technology Fair

Science history was made in this province on Saturday, May 9, 2020 when 5 students competed in the very first NL Virtual Science and Technology Fair. Plans for this fair began this past fall, spearheaded by a subcommittee of the Eastern Newfoundland Science Fairs Council (ENSFC). The volunteer members of the council organize the Husky Energy Eastern Newfoundland Science and Technology Fair. This fair, which takes place in St. John's each spring, usually involves more than 100 students from grades 7 to 12 from schools on the Avalon Peninsula. The highlight of the Eastern fair is the selection of students to attend the Canada Wide Science Fair (CWSF). This national fair was scheduled for a week in May in Edmonton, Alberta. The ENSFC covers all costs to send 6 students and 2 chaperones to this event. The plan for the NL Virtual Fair was to offer an opportunity for students in the other 3 regions (Central, Western and Labrador) to compete for "medals", prizes and 3 additional spots on Science Team NL at the 2020 CWSF.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 situation the CWSF was cancelled. This was followed by the cancellation of regional fairs across Canada. However, given the obvious physical distancing aspect of the Virtual Fair, organizers Yvonne Dawe, Heidi Kavanagh and Patrick Wells, all local high school science teachers, decided to continue with their plans if students were still interested in participating. The fair competitors included 4 students from Labrador and one from the south coast of the island, representing both school districts in our province: the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and the conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve et Labrador. The fair took place in Google Meets where students presented their projects to 4 local judges, 2 of whom were bilingual, and then answered judges' questions. Each student was allotted 30 minutes, after which points were tallied and "medal" certificates and other prizes were awarded.



Nicholas Flowers, a grade 12 student at Amos Comenius Memorial School in Hopedale won gold and was chosen Best of Fair as he had the highest overall score. Second place and also winning gold was Amy Gillard, a grade 10 student from St. Stephen's All Grade in Rencontre East. Third place and a silver medal went to Taylor Shiwak, a grade 10 student from Northern Lights Academy in Rigolet. The other 2 participants, both grade 7 students from Labrador won silver. Hannah Snider attends École Boréale in Happy Valley-Goose Bay while Meaghan Lee is a student at Centre éducative l'ENVOL in Labrador City.

In addition to the medal certificates, monetary prizes were provided by the NLTA Math Science Special Interest Council. These included \$500, \$300 and \$200 for first, second and third, respectively. Had the CWSF not been cancelled, Nicholas, Amy and Taylor would have been chosen to be part of Science Team NL. Notably, participation at the national level by students from Labrador would have been another first for our province.

In lieu of the national fair, governing body, Youth Science Canada, is hosting an Online STEM Fair for any student in the country in grades 7 to 12. Registration is now open and closes on May 18. Prior to that competition the ENSFC is hosting a virtual fair for students in the Eastern NL region this coming Wednesday, May 13th, 2020.

More information about any of these fairs including the projects from the May 9th Fair can be found at www.ensfc.wordpress.com