

Students turn into detectives at X-STREAM Games

By **PATRICK J. BUECHI**
STAFF REPORTER

Robots, baking and CSI investigations. It sounds like the best TV channel ever, but it all happened for real at the fifth annual X-STREAM Games & Expo.

The event, held Dec. 2 at St. Joseph Collegiate Institute in Kenmore, welcomed over 800 students and teachers involved in STREAM schools and academies to compete, and even show off a little, with their knowledge of science, technology, religion, engineering, arts and math.

“(It’s) an opportunity for students to demonstrate and show all their skills and creativity that they worked on all throughout the year,” explained Dr. Michael LaFever, superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Robotic competitions pit machine against machine and school against school in a contest of speed, control and communication. Teams of students build small trucks, then drive them to move and stack pylons.

Each year the X-STREAM Games hold a Science Scrimmage, where students use their science skills to build bridges or produce electricity through wind turbines. This year they had to use their best detective skills and forensic knowledge to answer the classic question “who done it” by examining evidence of a murder and questioning suspects. “Students learn to be forensic scientists. They have to learn who is the culprit,” explained Betsy Eden, STREAM coordinator at St. Gregory the Great School in Williamsville.

and inventors demonstrated their products in a “Shark Tank” presentation called the

Invention Convention. Even cooking can be seen as a science as students showed how a change in ingredients can change the taste of food in a Kitchen Chemistry bake-off, which highlighted “Bread of Life.”

Other events included self-made arcade games, video game coding, a student showcase of art, and displays of other STREAM Academies such as PEAP for younger students, Future Cities and Little Bits, electronic components that snap together.

“It’s a lot of fun. It’s like advanced Legos. I play with Legos a lot at home, now I get to go on a computer to program them to get them to drive around for me,” said Josh Tartick, a student at St. Aloysius Gonzaga School.

STREAM programs and events such as the X-STREAM Games & Expo allows academic concepts to be coupled with real-life applications. Students become involved in hands-on projects where problem solving, collaboration and the results of their efforts make lessons more relevant than by using a textbook alone. It also exposes students to careers they may not have otherwise considered.

“It is an opportunity for students to display their developing interest and aptitude in STREAM – coding, forensic investigation, fashion design, robotics, inventions, engineering design, and social justice in action through art and drama,” said Jean Comer, STREAM coordinator for the Diocese of Buffalo. “Our schools continue to stay on the cutting edge of preparing students for their bright future.”



(Above) Student engineers; Gabriel Pawelczyk and Hugh Mathieson, of St Stephen’s School of Grand Island, and DeSales School of Lockport, fifth-graders Kaimie Betsch and Haley Karaszewski try to stack cones in the St. Joseph Collegiate Institute gym during the robotics competition of the annual X-STREAM Games. Catholic Students from across Western New York took part in the Science based event.

(Left) Corey Anderson II, of St. Joseph University School proudly shows off his pumpkin bread at St. Joseph Collegiate Institute during the annual X-STREAM Games.



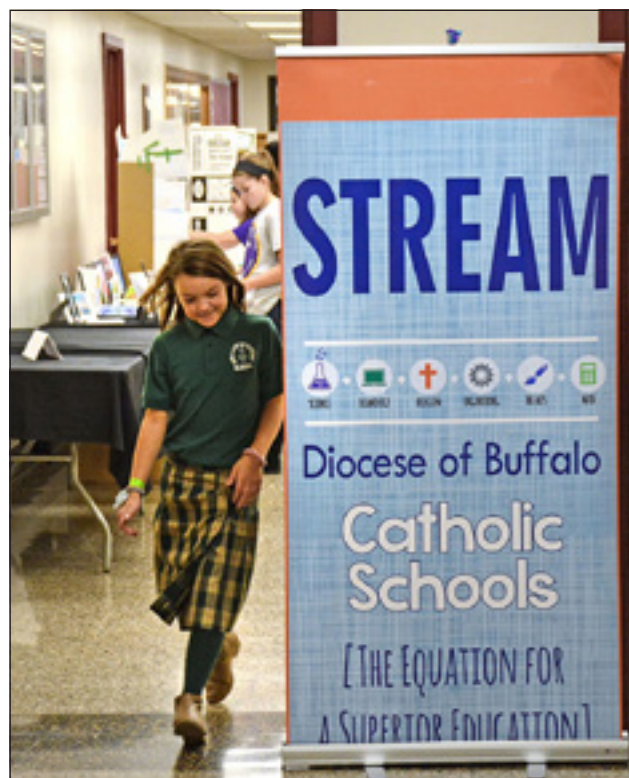
DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Competitors set up their Arcade Academy projects in the cafeteria of St. Joseph Collegiate Institute during the annual X-STREAM Games.



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Christ the King fifth-graders Amelia Hoch and Amelia Holt-Smith show off their entrepreneurship their automatic glasses cleaners as part of the inventions competition.



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Framed by a stand-up sign that says it all, students head down the main hall at St. Joseph Collegiate Institute during the annual X-STREAM Games.