



# SWE Activity Report 2004 - 2005

Event: Elementary School Outreach

Time - From: 6:30 AM To: 4:00 PM

Date: December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Number of Participants: 43 volunteers,  
~300 elementary school students

*Please attach all participant lists, relevant pamphlets/flyers, and pertinent info.*

Chairs of Event		
Name	Email	Year / Major
Christine Tran	Ct252	2007/ChemE
Erica Schlesinger	Ebs24	2008/ChemE

Please submit a brief schedule of the planning of your event and any relevant contact people:

Activity to be done	By (Date)	Contact Person	Phone Number (or Email)
Meet to discuss project, set timeline for semester	10/3		
Made volunteer announcement at general meeting, volunteer sign-up on tearoffs	10/6 – through December	Emily Warren	Elw29
Contact schools, pick project	10/15		
Organize volunteers and drivers	11/1		
1 <sup>st</sup> volunteer meeting	11/17		
2 <sup>nd</sup> volunteer meeting	12/1		
Buy breakfast food and supplies, organize supplies and email volunteers about the event schedule	12/4-12/5		
Day of the event!	12/6		

1. **About the event** – Please describe the event briefly. Was the turn out what you expected and/or wanted?

Our project was to help students design and build balloon-propelled “rockets” that had to carry a designated amount of cargo (candy) and that had to somehow move along a fishing line track. Students had a limited amount of time during which to work and to test their models; the groups then raced each other once, then were given a limited amount of time to make modifications, and then raced each other again. We thought that this process would best emphasize the kind of problem solving and testing that are so important to engineering.

The elementary school outreach event took place on the morning of Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, the first Monday of finals study week. We visited four schools in the Ithaca-Lansing area. Although our advertising (through weekly SWE-mails and during SWE general and executive meetings) produced an enthusiastic initial response, of the original 75 volunteers and drivers who signed up, only around 40 people ended up being able to make it on Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.

The turnout was suitable to the number of classrooms we visited though. The morning of Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> was a bit hectic because of the different schedules that each school was on. However, thanks to a lot of careful planning,

everything went smoothly. Volunteers had a great time during the event and didn't hesitate to step up and lead the discussions at the beginning and the end of each class period. We felt that the engineering aspect of our project as well as the variety of fields engineering encompasses were well addressed. Teachers were also happy to assist us and take part in the learning.

2. **Specific Problems** – Please list any problems that were encountered in the organization and execution of the event.

Although our budget was originally supposed to be \$100, we went a little over the cost of this event compared to last year. This was most likely because we visited a fourth school and because we planned to buy enough supplies for elementary schoolers to be able to work in groups of 4 or 5.

There was a small inconvenience with the number of volunteers who signed up to come and with the number who actually ended up being able to come (although the number of drivers this year wasn't a problem at all). In the end, we planned to visit as many classrooms and students as we had manpower for so having 40 volunteers show up was adequate.

A general suggestion for the chairs of this event in the future, get in touch with schools early! Although some principles were really good about communication, some others weren't (not only with communicating to us but also to the teachers within their school). Keeping the line of communication open between us and the schools as well as getting a definite answer required a great deal of persistence. At some of the schools, we got the impression from interested teachers who didn't participate in the program that they would have loved to have us in their classrooms had they been notified of our event.

One of the specific problems in the project we did was that the string would get really tangled up. Other than that though, this project worked really well because it could fit into different periods of time and volunteers had some flexibility with how they wanted to structure their presentation.

3. **Suggestions** – Please elaborate on ways in which SWE can improve this event for next year. Include general suggestions and advice for the future.

- We found it extremely helpful to have our two volunteer meetings on Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> and Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>. We decided to have two so that those who couldn't make it to the first would still be able to come to the second. The first meeting helped us a great deal in smoothing out the small details regarding our project. For example, we were able to get an idea of how much we should limit our supplies to each group, how we should structure the time period (40 minutes to an hour) that we would have to spend with the students, and how to budget our supplies so that we would have a little more than enough come the day of the event. Besides helping us figure out these logistics and helping us verify who would be showing up for the event or not, the meetings were also just a great deal of fun and a good time for volunteers to get to know each other if they hadn't already and to get a heads up on the tentative schedule for Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>.
- The volunteer to student ratio was about 1 to 5; we found that this number worked really well.
- Although we put a definite emphasis on who we are as engineers this year and how our project emulated many of the problem-solving and teamwork skills that are important to engineers, we still feel this point could be elaborated on a bit more.
- The initial SWE response to this project was very positive this year. If we retained a number of volunteers closer to our initial count or if we extended the recruiting to other engineering societies, we could reach more schools in the area.
- Provide teachers with SWE's contact information and surveys for their feedback regarding our project.
- Compile a poster of pictures taken during the event and short blurbs about what it means to be an engineer for each school

4. **Budget-** Please make a budget of things purchased for this activity and their prices.

Item	Purchased From	Cost
Food for volunteers	Wegmans	40.06
Balloons, straws, cups	Target	18.98
Cardstock paper, fishing line, scissors, tape	AC Moore	33.48
Food for volunteers, paper plates, candy	Tops	37.07
<b>Total =</b>		129.54