

## Students really enjoying SciTech program at Macville

By Bill Rea

The new science program at Macville Public School has only been going a couple of weeks, but there are already plenty of signs of enthusiasm.

The Peel District School Board has expanded the SciTech program this year to Macville. It's where students in Caledon and parts of north Brampton can take it.

It provides an interactive approach to learning about science and technology. It's aimed at young people who are creative and who enjoy problem solving.

Macville Principal Kelly Kawabe said there are two Grade 6 classes in which the program is being taught. They are still filling out the supplies, as she said they "get new stuff coming in every day."

But already, it's providing a "really, really cool opportunity for hands-on learning."

The students were handed a hands-on assignment recently, requiring teams of four to make a replica roller-coaster, using two six-foot lengths of foam pipe insulation, one metre of masking tape, scissors and a marble that had to successfully roll the length of their creation. Teamwork was a big part of this particular assignment. Kawabe pointed out many of these youngsters had only known each other about a week by that point.

Many of the students live outside the Macville area. But Kawabe said some parents have got together and are providing private transportation.

She said there had also been concerns that the program would just attract boys. She said almost half the students in the program are girls.

The program is only being offered to Grade 6 students this year, but the plan is to expand it to Grade 7 next year and Grade 8 the following year.

It's being taught by Swarnaly Modi, who helped launch the program at Tomken Road Middle School in Mississauga, and Sandeep Sidhu.

"They're very creative," Kawabe observed, adding she's already been presented with a list of about 40 extra-curricular activities they're interested in, such as a Rubik's Cube Club.

The program has benefitted other programs in the school. Kawabe said students have been getting involved in things like sports. "It's going to be a real boost to the athletics here," she commented.

Kawabe observed earlier this year one of the reasons Macville got the program is because of its central location. She also said the school has lots of room, so there will be no need for portables. The school population will almost double by the time the program has students from Grades 6 to 8.

The five-acre property includes an outdoor classroom that facilitates a focus on the science curriculum, with solar panels, a watering system, etc.

For parents interested in applying for next year, Kawabe reported their child must be in Grade 5 going into Grade 6. There will be an information meeting Jan. 21 at Humberview Secondary School in Bolton, starting at 7 p.m. Applications will open Jan. 22.

No busing is provided for the program.



Aditi Pujar, Guneet Khakh, Arnav Gandhi and Jayant Arora were getting started on their roller-coaster.



Gurnoor Soor, Daniel McCarthy, Anish Warriar and Keerat Ghuman were starting to put the finishing touches on their creation.



Teacher Swarnaly Modi was stressing the importance of team work to Harsh Shaw, Ryan Wilkie, Milika Purewal and Simreen Guram.