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K. Guruswamy | 17 JUN 2010 | filed under: Education

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The Exciting Science Group, National Chemical Laboratory, Pune

The Exciting Science group, at the National Chemical Laboratory and the Venture Center in Pune, aims to connect practising scientists with high school students and teachers. Starting with once a month popular talks in September 2008, our activities have now expanded to include outreach lectures at schools for underprivileged students, mentoring for students planning to send in entries to national science fairs and weekly science/technology video screenings. Details of what we do, and how you can get involved are available at our website: <http://www.excitingscience.org>

Our Activities, in Brief:

The Popular Talks series (once-a-month talks) combine live demonstrations, experiments and problem solving exercises to involve the students and engage their attention. School students get to hear a first hand account of what it means to do research, and to get a feel for the thrill of discovery. The speakers do not attempt to teach science to the students – rather, the idea is to create a sense of “wow” and to kindle the students’ curiosity. Encouraged by the response to these talks, we have put together a module of 5 talks/demos, on topics from school chemistry textbooks to make the science come alive for students. We will take these talks to three schools for underprivileged children in and around Pune.

Starting this year, we are also offering mentoring sessions to school students doing research based projects for science fairs, since we feel that doing science is the best way to discover the excitement of science and research. Recently, we have also started a weekly screening of science and technology videos (such as, for example, TED videos). This last programme is open to all, not just school students.

All our programmes are run free of cost to the students. We are supported by the National Chemical Laboratory and the Venture Center and have received generous donations from local industry (Battelle-India, Praj and Forbes Marshall) to run our programmes. About 20 scientists from National Chemical Laboratory, faculty from IISER-Pune and IIT-Bombay, and other volunteers have generously given their time for these activities.



Making ice cream with liquid nitrogen and other demos during Dr. Magesh Nandagopal's talk (May 2010, "Chemistry that you can eat")

To get involved, please contact: Dr. K. Guruswamy (NCL, Pune: 91-20-2590-2182, g.kumaraswamy@ncl.res.in) or Ms. Bhakti Dhamdhare (Outreach Assistant, Venture Center, Pune, 91-20-25893718, outreach@excitingscience.org)