



Archived Information

American Chemical Society: Promoting Public Engagement

The American Chemical Society (ACS) supports extensive programs to engage the public in the excitement of scientific inquiry and to stimulate the public's interest in science education and careers in chemistry. The activities of our more than 161,000 members contribute to public understanding of chemistry in local communities and across the nation. These activities are organized through the Society's governance committees, technical divisions and our 189 local sections.

Our **Kids & Chemistry workshops** are held for scientist-volunteers who want to work with K-8 students but have little or no classroom experience. Workshop participants learn how to plan and conduct activities that excite students and parents about scientific and mathematical careers, try different techniques for exploring science with children, and get tips on working with students and teachers. In addition to events organized by our local sections, **Kids & Chemistry events** are offered free to the public at many ACS meetings and can attract hundreds of children and their parents.

Project SEED and our Minority Scholars program received an award from President Bush in 2001 for excellence in science, mathematics, and engineering mentoring. Project SEED places over 300 economically disadvantaged high school students each summer in a research program for eight to ten weeks. The Scholars program is designed to encourage students from underrepresented minority groups to pursue undergraduate college degrees in the chemical sciences and chemical technology.

The **Chemistry Olympiad** is a multi-tiered competition designed to stimulate high school students to achieve excellence in chemistry. Local competitions encourage a large number of students to excel in chemistry. Some 900 students take the national exam and the top four U.S. students compete in the annual International Chemistry Olympiad. Teachers are recognized for their outstanding mentoring as part of the program.

ACS offers a wealth of information on **careers in the chemical sciences** that is available on our website and in print. Many of our publications are suitable for students in grades 9-12, as well as those pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees in the chemical sciences.

ACS also helps shape the **development of science education policies**, including federal science education programs as well as national and state science education standards. Our recommendations for improving science education, K through grade 12, are detailed in the ACS policy statement, [Science Education Policies for Sustainable Reform](#).

Our website, **chemistry.org**, offers content tailored to enthusiasts, students and teachers of our discipline. Wondernet, (for K-8 students) focuses on a new topic every other month and includes activities, examples, and explanations that link the science topic to everyday life and science. The Virtual Chemistry Club (for high school students) provides activities and information on careers in science and other topics. These sites received 126,000 web visitors in 2002.

Local sections and technical divisions may nominate **Landmarks in Chemical History** to honor notable places, discoveries and achievements in chemistry and highlight their importance to society. Events to celebrate the designation of the landmark are open to the public. To date, 46 landmarks have been designated in the United States and abroad. Descriptions of the landmarks are available on chemistry.org and a booklet is available at no cost to educators.

Local sections organize **National Chemistry Week** and **Earth Day celebrations** each year. Working with local industries, schools, and interested individuals, almost every local section organizes hands-on activities for children and their parents that allow them to explore the links between chemistry and everyday life. The National Chemistry Week Youth Activity Patch Program encourages the participation of youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire USA, YMCA Youth Programs, and 4-H, in National Chemistry Week activities.

Chemagination is an essay and poster contest that has been conducted in various cities around the country. Students write an article as if it were a feature in a future issue of **ChemMatters** magazine, the Society's flagship publication for high school students. Local sections sponsor and judge the contests. Participating local sections may have senior chemists who will mentor students after school and thus enhance the student experience without consuming class time.