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## Resource fair shows local teachers how Cornell can help

By Nancy Doolittle

While students in the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) enjoyed a day off Oct. 7, their teachers were learning how to use Cornell resources to enhance their teaching. They learned, for example, how to create simple experiments using electricity, magnetism and polymers and to take advantage of free hands-on activities, learning kits, lesson plans and staff visits from Cornell in their classrooms.

About 25 outreach programs from Cornell and more than 45 Cornell staff and students hosted informational booths on topics ranging from bioengineering to public service and on such university resources as Cornell Library and the Cornell Plantations. They demonstrated the interactive activities they can bring to a classroom and talked with the some 600 teachers attending the Resource and Networking Fair at the Ithaca High School cafeteria -- the first time the event was held downtown.

Teachers rotated through the fair at half-hour intervals by subject matter and grade level.

"The fair creates opportunities to connect Cornell outreach staff with the district teachers, letting them communicate their needs and interests to us and allowing us to collaborate with them in our fields of expertise," said Cal Walker, Cornell's outreach liaison to the ICSD.

"We use basic materials such as cardboard, batteries, popsicle sticks and water bottles in our demonstrations to the classroom," said Sam Posen, a Cornell graduate student in the field of physics working at the Cornell Laboratory for Accelerator-based Sciences



Jason Koski/University Photography

**Sam Posen demonstrates a simple motor for local teachers.**



Jason Koski/University Photography

**Donna Levy, Cornell Plantations, points out resources available to local schools.**

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and Education (CLASSE) table.

Teachers are surprised to learn that Cornell offers its learning kits and activities at no charge and will even provide free talks and demonstrations in the local classrooms, said Erik Herman, assistant outreach coordinator for the synchrotron.

Nevjinder Singhota, director of educational programs at the Cornell Center for Materials Research, said that she learns what local teachers need to help their students master such tests as the New York State Regents Examinations. Singhota then designs activities and materials to help address those needs and sends them out as requested, even nationally.

Kindergarten teachers are particularly interested in the outreach activities that Cornell Educational Resources for International Studies offers -- storytelling, craftmaking, performances and lessons -- that give children international exposure, said Momodou Sey, a graduate student representing the program.

Several technology education teachers -- Scott Breigle, Ian Krywe and Bill Sauve from Ithaca High School, and David Buchner from Dewitt Middle School -- said that they might take the simple CLASSE demonstrations a step further, using them as prototypes and then asking their students to improve them.

"Learning is all about engagement," said Adam Bauchner, ICSD liaison who worked with Walker and Cornell educational outreach staff members Lora Hine, Mary Ann Huntley, Nicky Koschmann, Nathan Lockett and Kaleigh Muller to organize the fair. "A lot of the teachers did not know what to expect. It is good to see them talking and gathering ideas." Walker added that evaluations were positive across the board, with many teachers expressing great appreciation for having had this opportunity and their hopes for beginning new collaborations from the connections they made at the event.

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