

2008 National *You Be The Chemist* Challenge

The thrill of a Challenge brought almost one hundred chemical industry representatives, excited family members, and educators to cheer on the twelve participants of the Chemical Educational Foundation's (CEF's) 2008 National *You Be The Chemist* Challenge on Friday, June 13 at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



After more than one hundred questions were asked, Christopher, an 8th grader from Elk Grove, Illinois, emerged as the winner, gaining the title of 2008 National YBTC Challenge champion! Ethan, an 8th grader from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and Nabil, a 7th grader from Reading, Pennsylvania, placed second and third, respectively.

The other participants were: Mahala from Brandenburg, Kentucky; Kit from Fort Mill, South Carolina; Raine from Houston, Texas; Jeremiah from Toledo, Ohio; Emily from Washington, DC; Inderbir from Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Andrew from Duncan, Oklahoma; Doug from Norwalk, Connecticut; and Elijah from Davidson, North Carolina.

"The *You Be The Chemist* Challenge, in its fourth year, is a wonderful opportunity to showcase local middle school students who excel at science and have a competitive spirit. The *You Be The Chemist* Challenge is a great fit for the sponsor, the student, the parent, and the teacher," stated Laura Tew, Director of Stakeholder Relations for Arch Chemicals, Inc.

The two-day event kicked off on Thursday with a rehearsal at the Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF). As the participants and their families anxiously anticipated the next day's competition, questions were asked, nerves were settled, and each participant received a YBTC bag filled with competition T-shirts, pencils, and water bottles. Rehearsal was followed by dinner at Philadelphia's historic City Tavern, a relaxed atmosphere that allowed the participants and their families to get to know one another and the CEF staff. Dinner at City Tavern was sponsored by AIG Environmental of New York, New York.

Competition day brought nervous, yet excited energy back to CHF. The participants, family members, friends, and industry members mingled at breakfast, gearing up for the Challenge ahead. The participants battled through seven rounds of competition, including a 40-question lightning round between Christopher and Nabil, before Christopher's knowledge of atoms lead him to win the competition.



All of the participants received a Thames & Kosmos CHEMC3000 chemistry set, a gift subscription to *Science Illustrated* magazine, and a gift card to the Discovery Channel Store. First-, second-, and third-place winners also received \$5,000, \$2,500, and \$1,000 savings bonds, respectively.

Also on hand to share in the excitement of the competition were members of the chemical industry and chemistry academics who served in an official capacity to ensure a successful competition.



The competition was monitored by three judges: Carol Jones, Science Consultant, Macomb County Intermediate School District, Clinton Township, Michigan; Barry Stewart, Senior Associate Production Engineer, Arch Chemicals, Inc., Brandenburg, Kentucky; and David Norwood, Associate Professor, Southeastern Louisiana University, Hammond, Louisiana. The official scorekeepers for the competition were Heather Okimoto, Program Assistant, CEF; and Kristi Van Buren, Membership and Marketing Manager, National Association of Chemical Distributors.

Two moderators guided the competition: Michele Magherita, Market Manager – Personal Care, Brenntag Specialties, Inc., South Plainfield, New Jersey; and Nandini Mouli, Black Belt – New Business Development, DuPont Fluoroproducts, Wilmington, Delaware.

After the competition, participants, their families, and industry members headed to the Franklin Institute for an afternoon of science exploration, including a Wild Ocean IMAX presentation and a Real Pirates exhibit. Competition activities were capped off Friday night with a celebratory dinner and lots of fun and games at Dave & Buster's. Friday's dinner was sponsored by Arch Chemicals, Inc. of Norwalk, Connecticut.



**Competition photos provided by Capone Photography, NJ
(Event photos provided by CEF staff)*

Thank You!

This year also brought an increase in the number of companies that sponsored the national competition. In addition to the gold-level sponsors – Arch Chemicals and AIG Environmental, the competition's silver-level sponsors were Brenntag North America, Inc., of Reading, Pennsylvania, and Thames & Kosmos of Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Bronze-level sponsors included Expo Chemical Company, Inc., Houston, Texas; the National Association of Chemical Distributors of Arlington, VA; and Turning Technologies, Inc., of Youngstown, Ohio.

This is the third year that AIG Environmental has sponsored this event. "We are proud to take part in an event that encourages the development of our youth. Chemistry and science are careers that deserve the highest recognition and the Challenge reiterates its importance," said Denali Marlane, Associations Manager, AIG Environmental.

CEF thanks its sponsors and all competition participants and attendees for helping to make another successful national competition.