

# Engineering the Future

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Founded in 1955, the Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair (GSDSEF) is a non-profit corporation that benefits seventh through twelfth grade students in San Diego and Imperial County. We are a registered tax-exempt, non-profit community service (501[C] 3) corporation (#23-733-2855) that, on a yearly-basis, showcases the talents of San Diego's youth.

Your support enables us to promote educational enrichment and provide a unique opportunity for independent achievement in science and technology for thousands of junior high and high school students. Our organization works with all private, parochial, and public schools in the Greater San Diego Region that wish to participate. In the last 12 years, over 7,333 students—selected from more than 70,000 entrants—have participated in our regional fair. Our 47th annual Fair was held on March 27 through April 1 in Balboa Park. The projects exhibited exemplified the best in county schools. Over 12,000 projects were screened for entrance and more than 990 exhibits were accepted. Our next fair is scheduled for March 19th through March 24th, 2002.

As an independent community service organization without funding or direction by state or local government, or by any of the school systems whose students we service, our operation remains unfettered by costly administrative policy changes. In addition, we do not receive federal or state tax dollars. We are dependent on private and corporate year-to-year donations of money, goods, and services. Unlike other organizations, *all* donations help directly fund our program instead of supporting an administrative bureaucracy.

We are seeking sponsors to ensure the future of the Fair. Sponsorship comes in many forms and on many levels, through the donation of monies, products, and services. To continue the Fair, we need year-to-year private, foundational, and corporate monetary contributions. We need your assistance to meet short-term Fair production expenses that total approximately \$80,000 per year. In addition, we ask for your support and asset contributions dedicated to the GSDSEF Endowment Fund which has a \$600,000 one-time goal. With your assistance, investment interest from this fully-funded account will enable the Fair to be self-supporting in the long-term.

Since our inception in 1955, we have administered our Fair to hundreds of thousands of area students. Your contribution allows us to continue delivering a program that empowers students to teach themselves. Through challenge, we cultivate self-confidence and encourage independent achievement.

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## Background & History

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## Invest in a Dynamic Paradigm

The Greater San Diego Science and Engineering Fair integrates, into one functional activity, all of the skills and arts that are usually taught separately—or sometimes not at all—in many schools. When brought to completion, each student’s project incorporates an amalgamation of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, math, statistics, ethics, logic, critical thinking, computer science, graphic arts, and scientific methodology. In addition, our program helps motivate ordinary students to develop into excellent students and well-rounded scholars. Students also learn invaluable information about one or more technical or specialty fields. For projects that qualify for formal competition, students master public speaking and debate skills in front of expert judges.

### **Competition Awards**

Fair winners receive place, professional society, and special awards. In addition to traditional awards such as a ribbon or a pin, various professional societies throughout San Diego judge the exhibits by their own criteria and present awards. Our Fair also incorporates a number of special awards such as scholarships. For example, top first-place winners from junior and senior divisions in our fair are selected as sweepstakes winners and receive cash awards. We also offer an all expense paid trip to New Zealand as part of an exchange program sponsored by the New Zealand and San Diego Kiwanis Clubs. In addition, approximately 120 top students go on to compete at the California State Science Fair held in Los Angeles every May. The 2 top students from our Fair also compete in the International Science and Engineering Fair held in May.

### **Academic Growth and Empowerment**

In addition to academic and personal growth, our Fair opens a number of doors for academic opportunity. For example, science fair honors rank high among the screening factors used by admissions officers at most top universities—graduating high school students with records of awards for original research or engineering at the regional fair level have a distinct advantage over other college applicants.

Studies of our regional fair winners—conducted for the 25th, 35th, and 40th GSDSEF anniversaries—show that during their science fair years, many of our participants won additional honors in related national and international competitions. For example, exhibitors in just one of our Fairs won:

1. trips to the London International Youth Science Fortnight and Japan Student Science Awards
2. four of the six student fellowships awarded at the Southern California Youth Junior Professional Development Science Fair

3. top prize at the National Junior Professional Development Science Fair
4. twenty three of the forty eight prizes awarded at the California State Science and Engineering Fair
5. four of the top awards at the International Science and Engineering Fair
6. six major prizes including the sweepstakes trophy at the National Consortium
7. two of twenty “speaker” slots at the California Youth Science Congress
8. awards totaling \$11,200 at the Inventor's Workshop.

During the same year, our exhibitors also won Bank of America, Bausch and Lomb, American Academy of Achievement, and Westinghouse Science Talent Search awards. As an outgrowth of GSDSEF participation, other winners have been selected as guest exhibitors at the New Zealand National Science Fair, addressed a medical conference in Israel, and attended the Nobel Awards Ceremonies in Sweden. Our exhibitors have also taken high honors in such notable science opportunities as the Research Training Program, the Lawrence Hall of Science Research Grant Program, and the Edison/MCGraw Scholarship Program.

By supporting our organization, your company is investing in the future. Over 85 percent of our Fair winners have science-related careers or courses of study. In addition, more than 80 percent participate in fields directly related to their science-fair project. A significant percentage of our winners also earn doctoral degrees.

With your help, GSDSEF assists in developing mature, self-confident, skilled, and competitive young leaders who have career goals and the preparation, discipline, and drive to attain them. Staffed by a volunteer team of dedicated officers, committee members, and award-winning students, we work year-round *without* compensation to plan, organize, and produce a comprehensive Science and Engineering Fair held every spring. Our activities include:

- training teachers and screeners in the procedures, standards, and regulations for science and engineering fair projects
- visiting classrooms to encourage and instruct teachers and students in the values and benefits of participation in science and engineering fair competition

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## Organization & Activities

- advising teachers and participating students, and assisting them in obtaining professional resources
- organizing and conducting screenings of thousands of student science and engineering fair projects in hundreds of San Diego and Imperial County schools, for selection of projects qualified to compete in the regional fair held in Balboa Park each spring
- maintaining a legion of hundreds of qualified volunteer judges from the professional and technical community to evaluate up to 1,000 projects in competition for awards and recognition at the regional fair
- preparing, publishing, printing, and distributing information and registration packets to hundreds of students; printing programs for the public, and advertising the Fair's schedule
- recruiting and organizing special award judging by professional, technical, institutional, and military organizations
- ordering and purchasing ribbons and awards
- planning and producing the presentation of awards for regional fair winners

In addition, we conduct the Fair competition and exhibition. Our dedicated staff:

- design exhibition layout space by numbers of projects per category and coordinate use of buildings in Balboa Park
- register and orient participants
- provide lunches and tours for participating students and refreshments for judges
- conduct judging
- provide for and safe-guard the public display of projects
- implement setup/tear down of displays and furnishings

After the Fair and the awards presentation ceremony, we oversee and facilitate the advancement of first-place and sweepstakes winners to further levels—including state and international science fair competitions.

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## Contact Us

To inquire about sponsorship and how your company can invest in the future of San Diego's youth, please contact:

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