

## NCW Down Syndrome 5K

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The Virginia Section helped sponsor and participate in the Step-Up for Down Syndrome 5K and family festival event that took place at a local, popular outside mall in Richmond, VA on October 10<sup>th</sup> 2013. Students (Chemistry Club members) and faculty (ACS members) from John Tyler Community College, ran 18 science tables with 12 different hands-on activities and helped children learn about the science of light, energy magnets, energy tubes, recycled robots, color and dyes, weather bracelets and tornado bottles, fog and snow and polymers as well as Fossils!

Children enjoyed making slime and super balls. They enjoyed learning about polymers and, again, being able to mix chemicals themselves, watch the "minute" hour glass timers expire for their experiment to be completed until their polymer was complete. They mixed colors to make their own special colored slime or multi-colored superballs! Children were fascinated with the tornado bottles and some played with them for hours, watching the vortex swirl madly over and over. Snow is always a huge hit. It seemed like the perfect temperature to have a snowball fight or make a snow castle. Many children enjoyed playing with the dinosaurs and plastic creatures as much as they enjoyed the making the fossils. Our students explained how the colors would not appear in the clay but we could see a print left behind showing us different features the creatures or shells might have had. Coloring is always fun for children of any ages. Children were able to make beautiful chromatography butterflies. They were able to look at light energy and made their own kaleidoscopes. Some children made the most elaborate water cycle bracelets. Children were provided a pattern to create the water cycle with beads, a song and were given a small colored 4"x4" paper to remind them of the cycle. We also provided those children who enjoyed coloring an 8"x11" picture they could color or take home. All of our activities were not only age appropriate but were safe and non-toxic. Children were provided safety goggles and gloves when needed. They enjoyed wearing the protective gear as much as they enjoyed the science they were about to be immersed in. These activities chosen had to be approved prior to the event and really were suited for children of all disabilities who had sensory issues, processing issues, or even learning issues. Children smiled and were so excited as they were becoming scientists and discovering or learning new things.

Attendance for this event was 750 runners and supporters. It rained and weather had an impact on the attendance. Teachers, who work with children that have various disabilities and who were participating or supporting the 5K, stopped by our tables to get materials of activities that were put together for them and an ACS kit appropriate for their students learning age. We made sure that they had activity instructions, NCW activities they could use in the classroom, and some take home experiments. The Step-it up for Down Syndrome event raised \$93K to help families of children with Down Syndrome. Due to the popular feedback we received for the science portion of the event, we have been asked to be a part of the event next year and hope to expand with even more activities.

This was our second year participating and sponsoring a great community event for children with down syndrome. We became involved in this event when the director for the Step-up for Down Syndrome attended our Fool for Art/CCED event. A group of children with down syndrome had enjoyed the many activities we had the April prior so much that they thought other children would benefit from the same experience so we tried this event on a smaller scale of 13 tables and the 7 activities: nature printing, weather table (tornados, snow and fog), making water cycle bracelets, fossils, slime, making superballs and chromatography butterflies as the choices.