

## Science show draws 800 to Thousand Oaks

By Robyn Flans

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Science took center stage in Thousand Oaks on Sunday when a former middle school technology teacher presented his road show to 800 attentive children and adults.

Tom Wahle, founder of Techsploration and a former teacher, performed for Super Science Sunday at the Goebel Senior Adult Center, captivating the large crowds with two performances of his "Structures" show.

Sponsored by the Discovery Center, the event began with Wahle's show. Later, guests could go next door to the gym at a teen center for hands-on activities.

Wahle allowed the kids to participate as he used bridges as structures to explore the principles of tension and compression while explaining beams, arches, buttresses, trusses, triangles, domes and more.

He began taking his science show on the road 14 years ago. "The kids are always excited about it," Wahle said in an interview. "Hopefully, I change the way they think, so when they go around, they can point and say, 'Oh, look, an arch.' "

Newbury Park resident Chris Allen brought his two children. "I'm hoping they'll have some fun with science," Allen said.

"I like science and math," said his 7-year-old son, Zach. "I was looking forward to today and the fun activities."

Simi Valley's Deepa Goel brought her 8-year-old son, Rishi Goel. She said they do a lot of science projects together at home. "We made a volcano and we made a battery once," Rishi said.

In the teen center gym, tables were set up with activities designed to get students to utilize math and science concepts and apply some of what they learned in the earlier presentation. Tables offered origami, laser, shape identification, bridge building and other activities.

One of the youngest volunteers, 12-year-old Kyle Kissler, was recruited from the White Oak School science fair. "One of the adults working there saw I was really good with the kids and having them think about the hypothesis and explaining their points and what not, so they asked if I'd like to volunteer here," said Kyle, who helped out at the patterns table.

Madeline Everlove, 8, of Thousand Oaks said she learned a lot. "I learned how bridges stand up and how they can fall down. I like all the activities, too. I love science."

Matthew Chuck, director of the Discovery Center teen program, was in charge of creating the activities. "A lot of it was in collaboration. ... We started with what the speaker, Tom, was going to talk about and tried to match some activities to go with that.

"The kids seemed to really enjoy the laser activity, which teaches different angles and reflection of light. The original idea was the talk about all those angles, but they're having fun."

*Editor's note (February 28, 2011): A story in Monday's A section about the Super Science Sunday event in Thousand Oaks contained an error. Those attending included Deepa Goel and her son, Risha Goel, of Simi Valley.*

