The ACS San Diego Section/Chemists With Disabilities Committee announces new Chemists with Disabilities Awareness Contest

For many of us, we choose to pursue an education, and sometimes a career, in science for various reasons. The discoveries that add to the advancement of knowledge and technology, which in turn may help people live better lives, often become our passion to pursue the field of science. Yet, many capable and intelligent students have been inadvertently denied even the possibility to pursue chemistry in education or as a career. Many who may have a physical handicap, such as sight impairment or deafness, find that science education is denied to them simply due to a lack of accessibly, especially the tools and equipment that is often inaccessible to them. For example, some of the key equipment used in science education is often useless by someone who is sight impaired. Many scientists and science teachers overlook these issues of accessibility simply because we are not conscious of these issues that effect students with disabilities. However, if we wish to educate more students in science, we must have the tools to teach those who are currently left out.

Creating the tools for teaching with equipment for greater accessibility can be easy to do, and relatively inexpensive as well. With some clever ingenuity and creativeness, standard scientific equipment can be readily made into tools with greater accessibility. For example, a standard wooden ruler or taper-measurer, for which might ordinarily be useless for someone who is blind, can easily be made more accessible by placing staples in the incremental marks. Thus, both sighted and blind students can use this new tool.

The ACS San Diego Section, in conjunction with the Chemists With Disabilities Committee, is pleased to announce a joint effort to bring Disability Awareness to our Chem. Expo. We have arranged a Chemists With Disability Awareness Contest. Create your ideas of taking ordinary things that might be use to teach science or use in a laboratory that someone with a disability would find challenging to use, and convert that thing into something more accessible. The entry with a clever and relatively inexpensive idea for accessibility will win $50!

By submitting your ideas, you will be sharing your ideas with others, and quite possibly you might create something that can be used by many teachers to help handicapped students learn science.

To enter this Chemists With Disability Awareness Contest, simple create that accessible tool using your clever idea, or submit your concept as a drawing with a clear and detailed explanation of creating that accessible science item. Bring your entries the morning of Sunday, November 2 to the annual Chem. Expo. A table will be available for you to place your entries for judging. Be sure to include your name and school secured to your submission (and something to secure your entry to the table in case of wind). Judging will occur just after noon, and the prize, along with a picture of you and your entry, will be taken for publication in our newsletter and submitted for inclusion on the Chemists With Disabilities Committee website. Although participants do not need to be present to win (for which then the prize will be mailed to you at your school), we encourage all of you to stay and learn. All participants can reclaim their entries once the judging is over. Any entries left after 1 PM will either be given away or tossed. So get your creative juices flowing and make that accessible science idea into reality. You can win $50, become more aware of accessibility and possibly you might even create something that will help our disabled students learn science!

For additional information, please call Paul Furth at (619) 479-6369 or write at paul.furth@gmail.com