For Immediate Release

Celebrating Innovation and Exploration at the LVJUSD Science Odyssey

March 11, 2019 – Livermore, CA - The gym at Junction Avenue K-8 was a hub of inquiry and innovation during the annual Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) Science Odyssey, which saw participation from 386 students in grades 1-12 presenting projects in science, engineering, math/data analysis, or computer science. Students patiently but eagerly stood by their projects, waiting for the next available pair of volunteer judges to examine their hypotheses and results. The topics for projects were widely varied, from robotics to psychology. Science Odyssey also included opportunities for students to showcase their artistic talents through art, photography, and fashion design contests.

This event provided community members a unique opportunity to connect with students passionate about science, to explore the context of students’ projects in the community and world, and to meet the next generation of scientists and engineers. The level of community support this year was outstanding, with over 80 community volunteers and guest judges from various agencies and organizations, including Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Labs, Kaiser Permanente, LARPD, and Livermore’s Water Resources Division. From within the LVJUSD community, 25 teachers and 70 high school students signed up to assist with judging, check-in, tallying scores, setup, cleanup, and crowd control. Advanced Placement (AP) students could participate as guest judges for the elementary level projects.

Retired lab scientists and engineers volunteered to judge projects and contribute their expertise in various fields, including some of LVJUSD’s own Teaching Opportunities for Partners in Science (TOPS) program volunteers. “It’s good to work with the community and contribute to the sciences in schools,” said Art Krakowski, a former electronics engineer who has volunteered through the TOPS program at Sunset Elementary for nine years.

This year’s Science Odyssey saw a large turnout in volunteers from Kaiser Permanente, thanks in part to another TOPS volunteer, Melissa Parker, who has a background in epidemiology and biostatistics. She had enjoyed attending the Science Odyssey and viewing projects with her children when they were younger, and found the opportunity a win-win, being able to support the District and students through something she loved. Parker shared the Science Odyssey through an internal volunteer portal at Kaiser, which resulted in a large influx of Kaiser volunteers contributing to the judging. “I was really impressed by the level of critical thinking, and the fact that many students were able to articulate how their results offered practical or creative solutions to some tough problems,” Parker said. “All the volunteers I have spoken with had a fantastic experience and felt welcomed by staff and students alike.”
There were several projects devoted to the environmental issues of water quality and conservation. The City of Livermore’s Water Resource Division (WRD) has been a long-time supporter of LVJUSD’s Science Odyssey, partnering to establish its “One Water” water quality award program to inspire interest in projects dedicated to the role of water in the environment and community. “Our goal is to make people more aware of our watersheds, water quality, our resources, and the responsibilities we have to the city,” said Lynna Allen, WRD Source Control Coordinator, who was one of the judges of the One Water award. “We’re working to help foster a connection to the city for these students, to illustrate that what you do at home and at school matters in conservation.”

Students and families who attended Science Odyssey were able to see the depth of community support and interest in the sciences, as well as the arts. Special awards were given out for photography - with winners chosen by members of the Livermore Arts Commission - and for art. Some pieces from the Science Odyssey will hang in the Bankhead Theater lobby in April, and will be included as part of the Innovation Fair on May 4th. The traditional “Trashion Show” - an event in which students display fashion crafted from garbage and recyclables - featured students’ creativity. Inclusion of the arts in the Science Odyssey highlighted Livermore’s diverse occupations and passions that contribute to the transformative ideas developed by the fertile minds within its schools and vocations.

“Thank you to those who supported our students and teachers with Science Odyssey,” said Regina Brinker, LVJUSD STEM Coordinator. “LVJUSD is unique in the region, if not the state, for presenting such an encompassing science and engineering fair that includes arts, and community enrichment activities.”

Livermore is famously a city of scientists, engineers, artists, agriculturists, medical professionals, educators, and more – passionate about the environment of their community, with aspirations to innovate and apply their collective knowledge toward enlightening the future. The LVJUSD Science Odyssey celebrates the collaboration of its population and the influence between generations of continual learners, sharing ideas and discovering together the formula for a bright future.

Read list of all 2019 Science Odyssey award winners.

Photos courtesy of LVJUSD and Livermore Granada Boosters

Photo 1: LVJUSD Superintendent Kelly Bowers, Ed.D. with “One Water” Best of Show Award for Water Quality Projects winner Sfurti Gaudani
Photo 2: Volunteer judges looking over photography entrants
Photos 3-5: Science Odyssey participants presenting their projects to judges
Photo 6: Student participating in the Science Odyssey Trashion Show

###

ABOUT LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the
Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit www.livermoreschools.org

**ADDITIONAL CONTACTS:**
School Board President Craig Bueno, cbuenotrustee@lvjusd.org (925) 918-7345
Superintendent of Schools Kelly Bowers, Ed.D. kbowers@lvjusd.k12.ca.us (925) 606-3281
Director of Community Engagement Philomena Rambo, prambo@lvjusd.org (925) 960-2917