

FEATURE

Catholic school student chosen for expedition

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — When he was in seventh grade, Alfredo Gonzales and his friends used baking soda and water to create "geysers" for a project in science class at Sacred Heart Cathedral School, 311 Flower City Park.

Now Alfredo, currently in eighth grade, will see real geysers when he travels to Yellowstone National Park from May 1 to May 10 as one of 20 "student Argonauts" from around the country participating in "JASON Project VII: Journey from the Center of the Earth."

"It's going to be exciting," Alfredo said during an interview at his school. "You get to do all this cool stuff with machines."

Some of the cool stuff Alfredo will be doing includes tracking wolves and grizzlies; monitoring daily earthquakes; and predicting when scalding water will surge from the geyser Old Faithful.

According to information from the JASON Project, the program was started by Dr. Robert Ballard in 1989 in order to stimulate student interest in science and technology. Ballard got the idea after thousands of students from around the nation wrote to him about his discovery of the wreckage of the R.M.S. Titanic, the famed ship that sank in 1912 in the northern Atlantic Ocean.



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Alfredo Gonzales, an eighth-grader at Sacred Heart Cathedral School, will be one of 20 students in the country participating in the JASON Project in Yellowstone National Park in May.

Students like Alfredo apply to participate in scientific expeditions that are administered by the JASON Foundation for Education. The foundation is funded by a combination of corporations and organizations, including the locally based East-

man Kodak Company.

This year, student expeditions will go to Yellowstone and Iceland, both sites chosen because they are located directly above geothermal "hot spots." The students work with scientists who conduct

field studies in geology, biology and glaciology — the study of glacier movement and how it affects climate.

Alfredo said he will fly from Rochester to Wyoming, and take a bus into Yellowstone. He said that he has traveled to Indiana and Puerto Rico, but was excited that this will be the first time he has traveled anywhere outside Rochester without his parents.

Fellow Sacred Heart students will be able to share Alfredo's discoveries at Yellowstone via several satellite TV broadcasts from Yellowstone to St. John Fisher College, he said.

Alfredo had to write two 350-word essays in order to apply to become a student Argonaut. One essay explained why he was interested in space and technology; and the other essay explained what he could contribute to the JASON Project.

"I said that I'd probably be a good leader, and show a lot of responsibility," Alfredo recalled.

The son of Alfredo and Elisa Gonzales, Alfredo has a younger brother, Andres, in Sacred Heart's sixth grade. In his free time, Alfredo likes to play soccer, baseball and video games, and to talk on the phone with his friends. But he pointed out that working on science and math in school brings him as much pleasure as his hobbies.

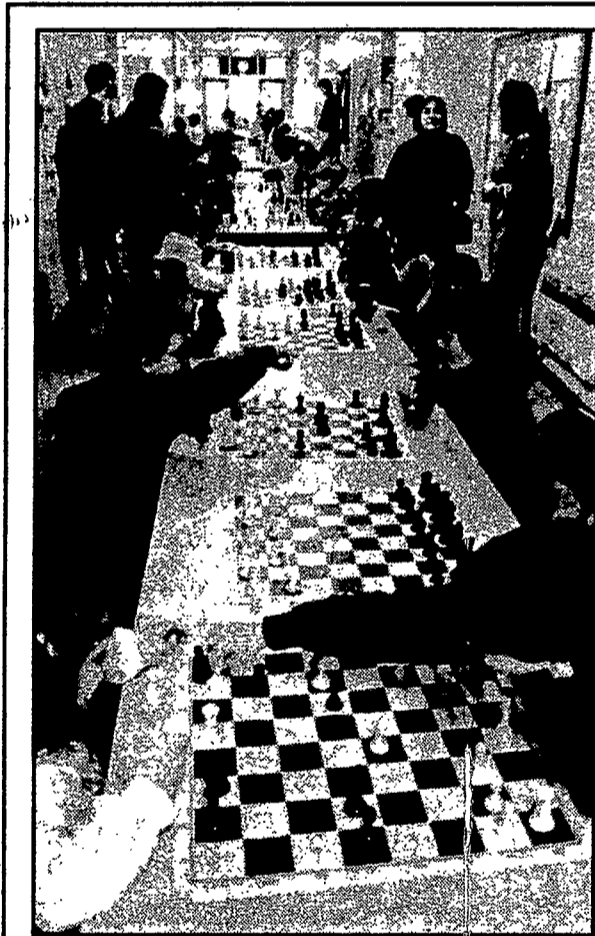
"I just like to solve problems," he said, adding that he studies ninth grade math. "When you get it right, it feels good."

His junior-high science teacher, Julie Keane, confirmed Alfredo's delight in discovery.

"He's an excellent student, always asking questions, always doing his homework on time," she said.

Like many kids, Alfredo got his taste for science by watching such TV shows as "Star Trek," he said. He dreams of becoming an astronaut and exploring outer space.

"It's so big and it never stops growing," he said.

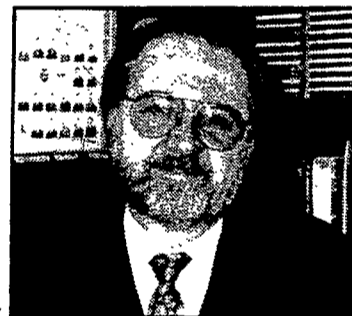


Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Checkmate

Donald Smith (above, left) of Seton Catholic School, Rochester, studies a move by Kanya Iguchi of Holley as the second-graders compete in Seton's first Winter Scholastic and Team Championship Chess Tournament Feb. 8. More than 90 children from grades K through eight took part.

Thoughts to Consider



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Funeral Director

Can children benefit from funerals?

Children are sensitive and emotional when a death in the family occurs. Children can benefit from a chance to attend the funeral and say their good byes. Like adults, children need some time to adjust and understand what has taken place. Seeing the deceased and understanding that death is different than life helps children avoid myths that suggest the deceased has only gone away or gone to sleep. Children who loved the deceased will gain from the chance to be a part of a meaningful ceremony. They should be told that the ceremony and viewing are special ways to remember the deceased. Naturally, children should only participate if they wish.

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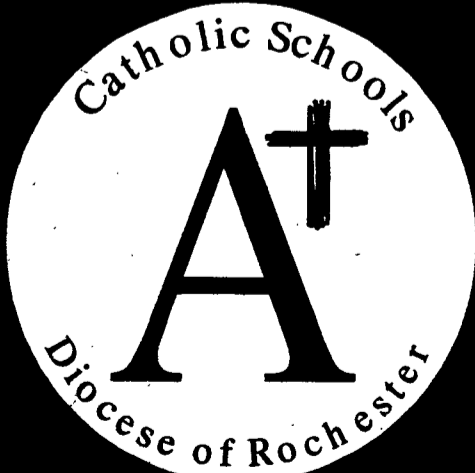
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