

International Year of Chemistry Library Project, Summer 2011

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The Orange County ACS Education Committee decided that an appropriate way to celebrate the International Year of Chemistry would be to introduce children to the wonder of chemical reactions and polymers. With the cooperation of 7 branches of the Orange County Public Library system, we presented our program, *Curious Chemistry; A Putty-lastic Potion*, as part of their summer library programs. The library staff were excited to have a free program, and the kids were enthusiastic participants.

The program consisted of:

1. A brief discussion of polymers, with emphasis on polymers found in the home
2. A kinesthetic demonstration of crosslinked polymer formation (using the kids in attendance as the “chemicals”)
3. Synthesis of their own polymer (Chem Putty)
4. Testing of their polymer.

At each session, one of our college professors or high school teachers would lead the discussion and demonstration, then college or high school students would help the kids with the synthesis and testing, so that all the participants got individual help. We even had one high school teacher show up because she read about the activity in the branch newsletter, and she ended up assisting with 3 presentations!

Between the end of June and the middle of August, we visited the Stanton, Fountain Valley, West Garden Grove, Villa Park, La Palma, El Toro, and Costa Mesa-Dungan branches in Orange County.

Schools providing instructors, student volunteers, or both were Golden West College, Irvine Valley College, Cypress College, Corona del Mar High School, Pacifica High School, and Huntington Beach High School.

In all, we provided a quality chemistry experience for 250-275 kids (and their parents, in many cases). Marie Curie would have approved!