

2011 Awards to Outstanding Members of the Laerskool Menlo Park Science Club.



The Pretoria Centre of ASSA has a friendly working relationship with a Primary School in Pretoria - Laerskool Menlo Park. The school has a Science Club, comprising about 40 children, and the Centre goes to the school about twice a year to give talks, and a viewing evening, for the student members of the Science Club, and for their parents.

As an outreach gesture, the Centre approached the school with a view to giving some sort of sponsorship or a prize to a deserving member of the Science Club. The recipients were to be chosen on criteria suggested by the School. The Centre was given three copies of a book about the oceans by Lerika Cross, and the Committee decided to donate these as prizes. Lerika is the prime mover behind the annual Scopex Exhibition. The books were donations to Scopex, and Lerika made them available to the Pretoria Centre. The Centre Committee decided to give one book per year, plus a book about astronomy to the recipient at the school.

The contact person at the school is Isabel Davis. When Danie Barnardo and Michael Poll went to see Isabel to finalise the arrangements, she indicated that she appreciated the gesture very much and she was very excited about the project.

The following criteria were used to select a candidate for the ASSA prize: The recipient would be chosen from their general performance in science and they should have participated in Science Club activities for at least one year. Additionally the person would have taken part in the School Science Expo and the Gauteng North Science Expo. The recipient would also be assessed on their performance in the Department of Education Astronomy Quiz, and in the Mathematics Olympiad.

In the event, the School identified two deserving candidates. Their respective performances were so close that the School felt that there was no choice other than to select both as winners, so the Centre decided to give one book to each.

Although the above criteria were the ones used to decide on prize winners, apart from their obvious excellence in science it can be noted that the two also excelled in other academic areas and sport.

NASTASIYA VREY: Nastasiya is a grade 7 learner at Menlo Park Primary. She received the following accolades at the 2011 awards ceremony:

The “Wonders van Wetenskapprys”, donated by the Pretoria Centre of the Astronomical Society of South Africa (ASSA).

Other achievements:

Swimming at National level.

Science Expo – best project in her category (Psychology) at Northern Gauteng level, where she received a gold medal and R250 prize money. She progressed to the National Expo, where she also received an award for best project in her category Social Science and Psychology as well as R500 prize money. She was one of only 13 learners selected to present her project to the Minister of Science and Technology. As far as academics go, she received an award for Natural Science and Technology for achieving an average of over 80%. She was also a member of the school's Science Club.

MONIQUE GEEL: Monique is a grade 7 learner at Menlo Park Primary, She received the following accolades at the 2011 awards ceremony:

The “Wonders van Wetenskapprys”, donated by the Pretoria Centre of the Astronomical Society of South Africa (ASSA).

Other achievements:

5 years of uninterrupted school attendance. She was selected on the athletics District Team. She took part in the National Cross Country championships and received the school's floating trophy for Cross Country athlete of the year. She also swam for the Girls under 13 A-team.

Monique took part in the AMESA mathematics olympiad and received a gold medal. She took part in the Science Expo where she received an award for best project in her category at Northern Gauteng level. She received a gold medal and progressed to the National Expo. As far as academics go, she received an award for English above 80% and she is one of the 10 best achievers in Afrikaans, Mathematics, Economic- and Management Science, Natural Science and Technology. She received a floating trophy for the best achievement in Social Sciences. She also received an award for achieving a mean average of 85% throughout the year. Monique also achieved an Honours Roll enrollment for achieving a mean average of over 85% from grade 4 to 7. She was also a prefect and a member of the school's Science Club.

The Centre is pleased and proud to be able to acknowledge two such outstanding and balanced young ladies, and we wish them all the best for the future.