



St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair

2026 Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

This year, 2026, was an outstanding year for the St. Mary's County Science and Engineering fair. We had over 150 student projects this year, and once again sent a significant number on to compete at the regional level in PG County. At the PG Regional Fair our students had another extremely successful year. Our students from St. Mary's County won 3 out of 6 Grand Awards. St. Mary's County students captured **three of the six Grand Awards** presented across both divisions:

- **Junior Division**
 - Adriana Liwanag — *1st Place Grand Award*
 - Camille Winnings — *3rd Place Grand Award*
- **Senior Division**
 - Rishi Sheth — *3rd Place Grand Award*

Rishi Sheth will represent the region at the **Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair**, that was held in Phoenix, Arizona, May 9–16, 2026. He competed alongside top student scientists from around the world.

Earning three Grand Awards at regionals shows that St. Mary's County students are performing at an exceptionally high level, even in a highly competitive environment. It reflects their strong academic preparation, creativity, and critical thinking, as well as their dedication and hard work. It also speaks to the strength of the county's schools and the support students receive from parents, teachers and mentors. St. Mary's County should be very proud of the accomplishments of our student competitors.

We are grateful for all the support the Fair received and would like to recognize all the judges, students, and parents for all their hard work which made this fair such a success. We would also like to say how much we appreciate our great sponsors who were instrumental in making our fair such a great success this year.

ST. MARY'S COUNTY FAIR

This year's Science and Engineering Fair was held on Saturday, January 16, 2026, at the Southern Maryland Autonomous Research and Technology (SMART) building. We had over of 150 Middle and High School students participating. This was an increase of 20 from the previous year.

This year was the first year we held the fair on a Friday instead of Saturday. This decision was derived from feedback we received from previous fairs from the students, teachers and parents regarding conflicts with extracurricular activities on Saturdays. We were able to reserve the SOMD Higher Education Center SMART building for a Friday fair and were able to work with the schools to make the fair a field trip for the students.



Students participated in 17 separate categories. All first and second place winners were offered the chance to move on to the next level and compete at the Prince George's Regional Area Science and Engineering Fair. Senior Grand award winners at the Prince George's Fair then move on to compete at the highest level: The Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which was held this year in Columbus, Ohio. In total 34 St. Mary's County projects competed at the regional level, and one moved on as a Finalist at ISEF.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Special Awards Judges evaluate student projects on criteria different than the Category Judges. Over \$3200.00 in cash and scholarships, plus other prizes, were given out by both local and international institutions. We want to thank all of the Special Award judges and their sponsors for making this a very successful year.



ST. MARY'S COUNTY GRAND AWARD WINNERS

For the 2026 St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair, there were a total of four Grand Award projects. Two for the Junior Division and two for the Senior Division. The Senior Category Grand Award winners were Diana Wyman with her project '*Nature's Solution to Microplastic Pollution*' and Paul Savvas with his project '*InfantGuard*'. Junior Category Grand Award winners were Andrew Ellerbe with his project '*Stick to the Beat*', and Camille Winings with her project '*Motion Controlled Robot Rescue Hand*'.



PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY REGIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR

Our Fair had a total of 31 projects which moved forward to compete in the Prince George's County Regional Area Fair. With help from our generous sponsors, The St. Mary's County Science and Engineering Fair Board pays all the registration fees for those students progressing. This ensured these students were not responsible for paying for the opportunity to compete at the next level.



The Prince George's County Regional Science and Engineering Fair was held on March 21. Thirty-one students from St Mary's County competed in the fair against other students from Prince George's, Charles, and Calvert counties. Our students did an exceptional job!

St Mary's County students swept 3 of the 6 total Grand Awards given in both the Junior and Senior Divisions.

Junior Division

- Adriana Liwanag — *1st Place Grand Award*
- Camille Winnings — *3rd Place Grand Award*

• Senior Division

- Rishi Sheth — *3rd Place Grand Award*

The Senior Division Grand Award winner advanced to the International Science and Engineering Fair to be held in Columbus, Ohio May 10-16, 2025 to compete against the rest of the world.

In addition to winning the half of Grand Awards, St. Mary's County students also won many 1st and 2nd place Category Awards.

Category Awards

St. Mary's County students earned recognition across a wide range of categories:

- **Junior Division (17 total projects)**
 - 5 First Place Awards
 - 3 Second Place Awards
 - 2 Third Place Awards
 - 2 Honorable Mentions
 - **12 students received special awards**
- **Senior Division (13 total projects)**
 - 4 First Place Awards
 - 2 Second Place Awards
 - 2 Third Place Awards
 - 1 Honorable Mention
 - **9 projects received awards**

Special Awards

Students also earned numerous Special Awards—many of which include monetary prizes:

- 8 Junior Division students recognized
- 5 Senior Division students recognized

INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FAIR (ISEF)

Great Mills High School student **Rishi Sheth** recently represented St. Mary's County on the international stage after competing at the **2026 Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)**, the world's largest international pre-college STEM competition. Held May 9–15 at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona, the event brought together more than 1,700 student finalists from over 60 countries, regions, and territories to compete for more than \$7 million in awards.



ISEF Finalist – Rishi Sheth

Rishi's Project was titled "In Silico Modeling of CAR T Failure in ALL". He competed against more than eighty other regional and national fair winning projects in his category from all over the world. We are proud that he represented St. Mary's County so well at the highest level!