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CUSD Middle School Students Solve City Challenges in Fifth Year of the
S⁴-Super Summer Science Search™ Contest
Cupertino Library Foundation announces 2016 contest prompt and dates

April 4, 2016 – CUPERTINO, CA.— The Cupertino Library Foundation (CLF) announced its fifth annual 2016 S⁴-Super Summer Science Search™ Contest, a free community program open to all outgoing 6th, 7th and 8th graders living in the Cupertino Union School District (CUSD). This year students will propose solutions to some of the biggest issues facing our country's cities.

“We are very proud that we’ve been able to bring this contest to the community for five years,” said Jerry Liu, CLF board vice president. “It remains an outstanding project-based learning opportunity for our middle school students to become proficient in scientific research, and to refine their creativity, while applying critical thinking skills and learning to collaborate and communicate their ideas clearly. Through S⁴, students can develop 21st century skills of the “Four C’s” (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity) that support the Common Core Standards. And students tell us every year they have fun creating their projects!”

Registration opens May 1 on the CLF website (cupertinolibraryfoundation.org), and ends June 30. Contest entries are due no later than 11:59 p.m. PDT, Saturday, July 30. This year the foundation is hosting five study sessions for contestants; the first session, open to any students interested in registering, is 3 p.m., Saturday, May 7.

Solving some of our cities’ biggest challenges is the theme of this year’s prompt, which was created by a team of high school leaders. Contest participants get to choose any U.S. city they are interested in, and are encouraged to pick one challenge from the areas of energy, transportation, housing, or a challenge of their own choice. Students may enter the contest alone, or in a team of up to three people. Entries include a five-page report, a citation list, a journal, and a digital presentation.

“We’re very excited to see what challenges students choose to tackle, and what their proposed scientific solutions are,” said Pam Marino, S⁴’s program manager. “Every year we are delighted by the creative ideas from students, and amazed by the level of detail displayed by the top winners.”



Prizes are awarded to the first, second third place individuals or teams: first place receives an iPad mini, second place receives \$100, and third place receives \$50. All participants will receive a digital recognition letter, and up to 15 teams will receive certificates, and invitations to the celebration event in August.

While this year's prompt is new, the "search" portion of the S⁴ Contest remains the same: students are required to do at least part of their research within the Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) online databases. Each student is required to use his or her own library card, available for free through the district.

The CLF also remains committed to its original commitment of supporting students in learning critical thinking skills around Common Core Standards, in partnership with the CUSD and the Cupertino Library.

This year there are four free Study Sessions to help students as they progress with their projects from May to July. The sessions are led by the high school leaders and adults of the S⁴ Team, and feature expert speakers who will help students understand each aspect of their projects. Complete times, dates and locations are available on the CLF website: cupertinolibraryfoundation.org/s4-super-summer-science-search/s4-study-sessions-2016/.

Contest judging takes place in three flights. The first flight is done by the S⁴ Task Force, to assess meeting of all the requirements. The second flight of judging is done by a group of teens also from the S⁴ Task Force, and past winners. The third flight is done by professionals in the community representing technology and other relevant fields. In the past, members of Google, Apple, Hewlett Packard and community leaders, in addition to Cupertino Library staff, served as final judges.

The S⁴ Contest remains free to the community thanks to a generous grant from the Peter Likhachev Family Foundation. This is the third year the foundation has supported S⁴.

The Cupertino Library Foundation is a 501(c)3 Public Benefit Corporation with the purpose to raise money to continue programs encouraging life-long learning and self-improvement through the Cupertino Library. It seeks major donations from corporations and the business community and from other foundations as well as individual donations and planned gifts and bequests. For further information visit: www.cupertinolibraryfoundation.org

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