

You Can Do It - Encouragement Letter

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Dear fellow students,

Did you ever have something really annoy you and not have a fix for it? Consider solving that problem or question in your next science fair entry. Yes investigate something adults talk about as a problem and never seem to get around to fix! It is hard to see the young brain as an advantage in solving a problem but it does occur. Consider the young brains behind Intel, Apple, Facebook, Netflix, and Google.

Consider someone who once presented at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. He was a student who was interested in how television sets worked as a student. He eventually got asked to fix the adult TVs! He didn't like the size, weight, or power required for a traditional TV and so he eventually developed the first LED TV (what we call a flat screen TV) and presented it at a local science fair. He went on to have a successful career at a defense contractor and has been awarded many patents.

It can seem as though these awards for scientific interest are a long way off. Did you know the Flint Regional Science Fair awards thousands of dollars in prize money and scholarships to high school students this year alone? An original idea or solution that seeks to solve a problem which interests you is a good place to start. It can help to be inspired by the world's problems and get encouragement from the things you read or the places you visit. After visiting the Smithsonian, I saw a woodpecker exhibit and wondered why these adult Scientists couldn't do better with preventing concussions in collegiate and professional sports. Eventually I won at my local science fair but I failed many times in my attempts at a successful outcome. Along the way I won many awards, scholarships, and prize money and it sounds cheesy to say it but that was of secondary important to proving to myself (and the adults that inspired me) that I could do it! Persistence was key, as Thomas Edison said, "genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration."

So consider making an entry to your local science fair. Along the way you will enjoy the competition, met new interesting people who have asked questions about science like yourself.