

Hart student presents pandemic relationships data at science fair

BY MARILYN THOMAS
mthomas@hfchronicle.com

Julian Kong Grisius, an eighth grader at James Hart School, presented at the Illinois Junior Academy of Science state fair April 22-23 at Bradley University with a project that examines student behaviors after the pandemic.

Julian set out to find an answer to two hypotheses: Did students being remote learners for about 18 months have a direct relationship to a disregard for social norms, and: Did students being active online with a specific group of friends during the pandemic lead to an increase in conflicts between other groups of students.

To his surprise, he couldn't prove those theories, but his data did point out students who were socializing online during the pandemic had more conflicts with friends and others when they returned to school and would ignore rules more often.

Julian said that data "was probably the most interesting thing about this project across all the results possible, to find correlations that support the idea that people who interacted online tended to have more conflicts when they returned to school."

His work was an independent study. Julian, 13, said he decided to conduct the re-

search "on a whim...The pandemic seemed like the biggest cause for change, and one of the biggest causes of social isolation."

He used an online survey, and got 73 responses from sixth, seventh and eighth graders at Hart, and 34 teacher surveys. A separate survey was filled out by 125 parents. Questions were answered on a 1-5 sliding scale.

Students were asked to address 15 questions. For example, "When school returned to in-person fully, I disagreed with people who are not part of my friend group." Teachers were asked seven questions, including: "When school returned fully to in-person, my students argued with me."

He was required to present a paper outlining his study, and a poster board display with his findings. His mom helped him with the various correlations and he learned how to use a software package for the data. His parents, Kin Kong and Jim Grisius of Homewood, accompanied him to the competition.

James Hart science teacher Brendan Fleming supported Julian's work. He said it gave credence to what teachers have been seeing this school year. "I think everyone was having a tough time, but I think we're out of that (pandemic mode) now," he said.



Provided photo

Julian Kong Grisius represented James Hart School at the Illinois State Science Fair with his project on how the pandemic affected students.

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