

# ScienceQuest

## Fact Sheet



### **What is ScienceQuest?**

ScienceQuest is a unique after school project blending informal science and technology and was piloted spring, 2001 in the greater Boston area. Through ScienceQuest, youth between 10 and 14 form small teams and work in local community technology centers with volunteer coaches to investigate an area of science of interest to them. The technology centers are where the tools reside, but the project is powered by the unbridled imaginations and curiosity of the kids and the enthusiastic support of the coaches. The finale is a twenty-first century version of the science-fair: web sites that display their discoveries.

### **How is ScienceQuest funded and who are their partners?**

ScienceQuest is funded in part by a three-year grant from the National Science Foundation and is a partnership with Education Development Center and ThinkQuest, the award-winning youth web design contest. ScienceQuest's partners are community technology centers and local science museums, aquariums and other local resources.

### **How do the ScienceQuest teams work?**

Through this program, the young investigators explore science topics through their local community technology centers in small groups. They use the Aquarium, the Zoo, local bio-tech companies or the empty lot next door to discover - via their own excitement - how the world works. After exploration, teams research, ask scientists questions via email and explore their questions further. To present their findings to the world, they build web sites that educate, explain and demonstrate that these young people know their stuff. Housed on ThinkQuest.org, the sites are among hundreds developed by young people from all over the world on a site that gets thousands of hits a week.

The coaches are parents, college students, retired engineers and future teachers - but they are not experts. Instead, they receive training and support in guiding the teams as they discover and model how real researchers work - one step at a time. Resources are available to the coaches through a web site and list-serve for them to share ideas and tips. Using the local resources of community technology centers, the teams have ready access to the internet, digital cameras and other tools for discovery. These tools allow for engaging investigations, but also support the learning needs of adolescents, some of whom might have disabilities. With visual, text and audio information gathering, science becomes more accessible to those with learning disabilities and exciting to all young people.

### **What are the plans to expand the ScienceQuest model?**

ScienceQuest is growing by expanding to more sites at community technology centers in other parts of the country. Regional after school collaboratives are also becoming part of the ScienceQuest program and launching teams. There are exciting plans for the future of after school science and technology explorations. Contact us to find out more.

### **How can I learn more?**

Contact: Jennifer Dorsen

Project Director  
(617) 618-2686

[www.edc.org/sciencequest](http://www.edc.org/sciencequest)  
[Jdorsen@edc.org](mailto:Jdorsen@edc.org)