

National Chemistry Week in Calgary

The Chemistry Department at the University of Calgary organized Chemistry Show in a shopping mall for the first time in 1991. The purpose was to spark interest in chemistry and popularize it as a part of everyday life. From the very beginning the Show became a special attraction, thus it kept growing over the years. Last October we hosted the 12th consecutive Show. It consisted of 17 educational displays with a number of comprehensive demonstrations, interesting hands-on activities and competitions. Each of these was accompanied by informative explanations delivered by enthusiastic volunteers.

The popularity of the Show grew enormously among visitors as well as the volunteers. For the last Show all 114 volunteer positions were filled in only one week, primarily by undergraduate and graduate students. Approximately 45 others regrettably remained on the waiting list. Quite a number of volunteers from previous Shows, who enjoyed the experience so much in the past, joined us again. Also many new volunteers this year pledged to participate again in the future. The majority of volunteers and visitors were disappointed to find out that the Show takes place only once a year. In addition to an extensive advertising on TV, radio, newspapers, in schools, on the web and in the mall, numerous calls and messages were received before the Show from those who wanted to make sure not to miss it. During and after the Show, science and chemistry teachers from junior high and high schools contacted us with compliments and asked for procedures and/or ideas for demonstrations suitable for their teaching program or science projects. Some teachers asked for an opportunity to bring their students to the Department for a tour and to view demonstrations, while others invited us to visit and perform a set of demonstrations in their classrooms. Many students, who visited the Show, wrote school essays about it and/or demonstrated some experiments to their peers.

The Show has become a tradition in the Department and in the community and represents a special entry in our calendars. Therefore we are investing a lot of time, effort and finances to keep it alive and enrich it to be more attractive and educational for many more years to come.

Dr. Majda Djordjevic
Chemistry Show Coordinator
(1997 - present)