Going to the 2017 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair was one of the best experiences of my life. Not only did I have a ton of fun, but I also learned a lot. My week in Los Angeles was one I will never forget. I am so grateful for the opportunity to go to ISEF and so thankful for all the people who helped me get there. This experience made all of the hard work completely worth it and I will continue to strive in the field of science.  
    I had so much fun in beautiful Los Angeles. It was amazing to see the Endeavor  
space shuttle at the California Science Museum. Also, the museum’s beautiful rose garden was so fun to explore. The La Brea Tar Pits were also a sight to see! I enjoyed going there with my family and seeing the skeletons of prehistoric animals such as the mammoth, mastodon, dire wolf, and saber-toothed cat. I also enjoyed the student mixer, where I met and talked to several new friends. In fact, at the mixer, I made a lifelong friend from Mexico and we are helping each other with the opposite language.   
    But I must say, one of the biggest highlights of the trip was going to Universal Studios and having the park all to ourselves. We got to go on the studio tour where we saw several sets and recording stages for the filming of shows like The Voice, America’s Got Talent, and The Good Place. The tour also consisted of two amazing virtual reality simulations: a fight between King Kong and a T-Rex, and a car chase with the Fate of the Furious cast. I also was a huge fan of the transformers simulation. Last but not least, Harry Potter’s world was also an amazing component of the Universal night. The ride was amazing and all of the shops made it feel like you were actually in the wizarding world! Another highlight was swimming in the ocean and visiting Santa Monica Pier. The weather was beautiful and it was an exceptional end to the trip.  
    But of course my favorite part was meeting people from all over the world and making new friends. I loved the pin exchange and was able to get some beautiful pins. I think the whole experience has helped me open up, and it has inspired me. Not to mention all the amazing projects and ideas. The students that participate there are incredible scientists and I am honored to be able to learn about the things they have discovered and created!

    Overall, the International Science and Engineering Fair was one of the most incredible experiences of my life and it will never be forgotten.

***-Alyssa Rawinski, Monte Vista High School***

ISEF is always fantastic, but I think LA is definitely the best place. This year, I was super fortunate to be selected by SLVRSF and CSEF to go, my first time placing overall in the senior division at state.  I think we had a really great group go this year, which made it even more fun (how is that possible?) One of my favorite parts was the Pin Exchange, where I met up with my friend Jade, who I met in Phoenix last year. She’s from Australia, and it was so great to see her again! The newest and probably best thing of ISEF was free and non-crowded access to Universal Studios. From 7pm to midnight, our party wandered around wide-eyed and extremely happy. The Wizarding World of Harry Potter had just opened, and it was so amazing to see one of the best book series ever brought to life! The technology incorporated into the Hogwarts ride was unbelievable—it really and truly felt like you were flying! Another one of my favorites was the Jurassic Park ride, which on the third and final time of riding it, EVERYONE got soaked. Probably the most hilarious aspect of the trip was Sara and her lack of ability to feel public embarrassment. She brought along some tiny plastic hands that look like they were torn right out of a doll’s arms, and never ceased to make people double take and laugh when she offered a high five.

Throughout the week, we visited many museums and other interesting places. We train hopped across LA to Chinatown, where it was neat to see a glimpse of a different culture. Interviews went well, and Public Day was a blast, meeting hundreds of kids interested in your project or just you in general. Although no one from the SLV won anything, Colorado overall did very well, with a good number of placers in various categories. After packing up our boards and saying goodbye to the convention center, everyone went off to change clothes. It was time to head to Santa Monica. The remainder of Friday was spent walking around Santa Monica Pier, swimming in the ocean, and having fun with close and newfound friends. I am so glad to have spent a week with Sara, Elora and Alyssa, as well as our fantastic sponsors, and I hope I’ll be able to do it again in 2018!

***-Molly Nehring, Monte Vista High School***

I remember that early morning heading to the Albuquerque airport, me in the driver's seat, and my mom in the passenger's seat. I was so excited, so nervous, and I remember not wanting to stop. I got on the plane to Los Angeles hoping that I would learn, make new friends, have fun, and really get an idea of what I need for next years project. As the plane took off I felt so blessed to be able to have this chance, this chance to look at the world through thousands of different eyes, from different places, and to see new things.

The environment captured the excitement well. A large building covered in ISEF signs everywhere. I remember walking in and my eyes were immediately caught by the sign “Think Beyond. “ I soon realized that this is what International Science is about, thinking beyond yourself to do something that can change the world. To go beyond the expectations to change someone's life, to go beyond your state, your country, and think of the troubles of the world and solve those problems. The exhibit hall was my favorite room. Everywhere I turned there were extraordinary projects made by high school students just like me. I could relate to each one of them. They wanted to succeed, and had overwhelming needs to change the world. I meet hundreds of kids from all over the world and I still talk to a lot of them today. I was inspired by the volunteers, the finalists, and the mere kindness of the nobel prize speakers. I’m  especially thankful to have meet Manu Prakash, a professor of Bioengineering at Stanford University, who has traveled to India, and Madagascar to help people in need. He engineered simple things that make a real difference in places that doesn't have the resource for health care. He inspired me to think beyond my small town, and make a difference for people that really need it. Because of him I realized that I wanted to be a medical missionary to do my part in serving the people that have less than us.

I left Los Angeles with more knowledge about the world, the different kinds of cultures and the overwhelming problems it faces. I came back knowing I had new friends from Japan, South Africa, England, Germany, Australia, Ireland, Israel, Puerto Rico, China, and I even had the opportunity to connect with some amazing girls from Monte Vista. I came back with a determination to change the world, to understand that it is science not silence that makes the world a better place. I came back knowing that I can make a difference, and every single one of you can too. Just believe in yourself, and never give up no matter hard it gets.

***-Elora Smith, Sargent High School***