ISEF 2019 in Phoenix, Arizona was an incredible experience. I have been fortunate enough to have attended ISEF before as an observer. This year was very special to me because I had honor of attending through the Colorado State Science Fair. There are so many great experiences at ISEF including the pin exchange where I got to meet people from around the country and around the world. My favorite part of my ISEF experience was interview day. Its nerve racking to meet your judges that are professionals in the field of study, but they are super nice people that just want to learn about your project, and they understand that you are the expert on your project not them. Even though the pin exchange’s goal is to get everybody to meet each other, I found that I got to meet and talk to people more on interview day.

Everyone from Colorado got to have shirts that we all wore for the opening ceremony which was really cool. And of course, it was great when we had a Coloradoan win the top prize at ISEF. Seeing what all these intelligent people can do makes you feel like you can do anything. It is truly an honor to represent the San Luis Valley at the International Science Fair and we are super luck to have this opportunity not lonely do research on something that we love, but to be able to present it to get recognized for our work.

-Sara Nehring, Monte Vista High School

To compete at International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) for a second year in a row was a dream come true. It was truly the most amazing, fun, busy and nerve-wracking week I have had. The opportunity to compete at this level happens for few people, but having the chance to compete two years in a row was a dream come true. Lining up to walk into the competition room makes emotions amplify. I was nervous, excited, and ready to tell the judges about how great my research was. Aside from myself, it is amazing to hear about other people’s work, projects and ideas for the overall improvement within our world. ISEF is a place for some of the smartest students compete and share their ideas and thinking about it now is truly baffling.

Aside from competition, one of my favorite things is the pin exchange. The pin exchange is one of the first nights you can see and meet people from different cultures around the nation and globe. A night that is always fun is the student mixer where people dance, play games, sing, and talk. It’s always interesting and funny to see students dance, especially if they have never been exposed to American music or in such a large group.

By the end of the week last year I couldn’t wait to start thinking about my next project, sadly that was my last year of competing but it opened doors for my future within college and possibly a career. ISEF is life changing because it can grab your attention in topics and ideas you may have never heard or possibly wondered.

-Amber Michel, Monte Vista High School

All these years later, I still love that butterfly logo as it symbolizes discovery, growth and change. Years later, I still follow the science fair (through the Valley Courier mostly) and actively participate as a judge at the Ohio State Science Day (Ohio’s State Fair). Over the years, I have judged fairs in Texas and Massachusetts as I reside there. I have always been impressed that the SLV Regional Science Fair does a great job with the number of awards and acknowledgment it gives to its participants; our future. The quality and depth of work the students do is amazing. I feel fortunate to have been able to be a part of the SLV regional Science Fair; and again, the fair does an exceptional job of providing students with the opportunity to show that science is alive and done extremely well even in rural areas of the world.

Congratulations to all the participants and thank you to all the enthusiastic science teachers, volunteers and those who donate to keep this as a vital way of giving students the opportunity to challenge themselves to be curious about science and expand their ability to stretch their imagination.

-Cliff Pearcy, Monte Vista High School Alumni