

## Cedarville basked in Samsung spotlight

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XENIA — Officially, the group of Cedarville Middle School computer students was not among the five national winners of the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest. But after receiving technology worth nearly \$40,000 and some national attention, it'll be hard to convince anyone associated with Cedar Cliff Local Schools they didn't win.

Between a trip to New York, technology and a feeling of accomplishment, the district walked away with quite the haul.

“What we gained from the Samsung contest in terms of confidence, exposure, and positive feedback was unbelievable,” Principal Chad Haemmerle said. “The journey and experience are usually more valuable than any prize. We are incredibly proud of Mrs. (Angela) Yake and her students. To be in New York City presenting and competing with large STEM schools from around the country is a tribute to our teacher, and our students. Plus the \$38,000 we won is a big chunk of money.”

Sponsored by Samsung, the Solve for Tomorrow Contest was designed to increase interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) by challenging teachers and students to take topics out of traditional classroom settings and into local communities.

The seventh and eighth graders in Yake's class entered the contest after designing an “app” to help provide information about the Village of Cedarville.

The project was voted best in Ohio and a few days later was named one of 15 national finalists. With it came a trip to New York for Yake and two students — Karie Yake and Eva Sheridan — who made an in-person pitch as to why they should win. Five of the 15 were chosen as national winners.

“While we were obviously disappointed at not being honored as a national winner, we were so excited and appreciative of the awards we did receive from Samsung,” Superintendent Chad Mason said. “This was a tremendous experience for our students and Mrs. Yake, giving us a chance to highlight the wonderful work she does in the area of technology education for our students.”

The students designed the entire app, which included the HTML coding. They started Jan 12 and went live with the app Feb. 4.

“I never knew sharing an idea could turn into such a great experience,” Angela Yake said. “The entire process was overwhelming and exciting. I'm glad that by writing this grant I was able to provide new technology to Cedar Cliff Local Schools through this process because so often the rural schools that are performing well on tests are overlooked for funding because they aren't 'at risk.' I want my students to know they are important and can make a difference locally and globally.”

The Samsung contest is an annual event and she is already thinking about next year, which could include more collaboration.

“All of the other schools in the top 15 did their projects as a partnership between at least two classes with two teachers,” Angela Yake said. “Many were career tech centers or STEM schools with project-based curriculum at the base of their everyday coursework. It's exciting that we did so much in a self-contained classroom but I look forward to projects that I can do as part of a team.”

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