



SOCIETY OF PHYSICS STUDENTS

An organization of the American Institute of Physics

Future Faces of Physics Award Proposal

Project Proposal Title	Rhodes College SPS at Overton Park
Name of School	Rhodes College
SPS Chapter Number	5940
Total Amount Requested	[Total amount requested should not exceed \$500.00.]

Abstract

Rhodes College SPS at Overton is an event where we share our favorite physics demos and games in Overton Park, illustrating the fun of physics to children in the park. We aim to make physics more interesting and accessible to kids, to grow or begin their budding interest in science.

Proposal Statement

The entire Proposal Statement should be no more than 2 pages, and organized as follows.

Overview of Proposed Project/Activity/Event

This event is carried out at Overton Park, a public park in Midtown Memphis. Collaborating with the park, we bring our physics own demos, games, visuals, discussions, and excitement to an allotted space, and we share them with interested children (or adults) who walk by. Because it is an outdoor event, we execute this event on a select Saturday of each semester, and we time it such that the weather is neither too warm nor too cold to ensure maximum possible attendance. Our attendance is ultimately at the mercy of how many families are strolling through the park, but we tend to draw a rather large crowd throughout the 2-hour period. With this event, we hope to inspire young minds to find an interest in science, showing them the more exciting sides of science that they may not see at school. We are specifically hoping to share our excitement in *physics* with the children, because physics is often misconstrued as monotonous, difficult, or unrewarding. We want to make physics more accessible, tangible, and visual to the Memphis community, illustrating the reward of a journey through physics. This is a relatively new event for Rhodes College SPS, but even at its first execution last year, it has been a big success. As a college campus, we are fortunate to have Overton Park right next to us, making it easy for specific groups and organizations within the college—such as our SPS chapter—to host events in the park, catered to the greater Memphis community. It is easy to transport our demos and games to the park, and because the park has a lot of open space available for us, it is easy to set up and tear down the event.

How Proposed Activity Promotes Physics Across Cultures

The overall goal of this event is, in essence, to promote physics across cultures. We want to ensure that physics is accessible for the children in Memphis, demonstrating the excitement and fun to be had in what seems like a daunting subject. We bring this event to the public park in Midtown to *bring physics to the people*, rather than expecting the people to go to physics. We want to help ensure that people of all backgrounds—with any form of cultural identity—are equally able to access exposure to physics, and we do so by bringing physics to the everyday Memphians in the park. This gives us, SPS at Rhodes, a chance to connect to and bond with the people of Memphis, which strengthens our relationships with the city. Because Rhodes College is a small, gated campus, it is easy for Rhodes students to stay inside our “bubble”, and it is easy for Memphis to stay out of our bubble. This chance of bringing physics to Overton Park gives us the opportunity to connect with Memphis, and it lets us physically illustrate to local children how rewarding science can be. We use this opportunity to rebuild the disconnect between the Rhodes community and the Memphis community, but foremost, we use this opportunity to bring physics to kids of all cultures.

Furthermore, this event builds a connection between Rhodes College and Overton Park. The park is right next to our campus, yet we don't use the park to our advantage often enough. Not only does event lets us enjoy the beautiful Overton Park in midtown Memphis, but it primarily gets us in touch with the park itself and the programming at the park, building a connection that could be expanded upon for years to come.

Plan for Carrying Out Proposed Project/Activity/Event

In our executive board, we have an Outreach Programmer, who plans events that are off-campus. She will reach out to Overton Park to set up the date and location within the park for us to set up. Overton Park will advertise the event throughout the park, and we will post about the event on our social medias. With enough social media advertising and with the park’s advertising, we should reach a satisfactory audience size. Members of our executive board will participate in the event through planning the event, setting up and tearing down the event, and monitoring the demos and games during the event. All members of our SPS board will help out in some capacity, but each role will depend on the involvement of their position. For example, our “demo officer” will be monitoring the event the whole time, to ensure proper set-up, execution, and tear-down of our demos. While our Outreach programmer may have a time-slot of volunteering at the event itself, she will have a more prominent role behind the scenes, pulling the event together and contacting the necessary people to ensure everything is prepared. We will also reach out to our SPS members through emails and our biweekly meetings, and encourage them to volunteer, so that every part of the chapter is represented. With the planning of the exec board and the help of chapter members, we can ensure the event is executed successfully.

Project/Activity/Event Timeline

We plan to have this event in late March, in the spring of 2026. We are actively in communication with Overton Park about an exact date. In years past, we have executed this event in November. However, due to internal chapter conflicts and conference travels, we decided that we should aim for hosting the event during the spring of this academic year.

By the end of December	- Determine exact date for event
By the end of January	- Collect/order all necessary materials for demos and organize volunteers - Map out location for event within Overton Park to envision set up and plan demos
Mid-February	- Allow time for ordered parts to arrive, and begin advertising to professors and Memphis community
Early March	- Obtain all ordered parts, ensure all demos are working - Ensure all necessary outlets at the park are working for demos
Week of Event	- Organize all necessary items and train volunteers on demos as necessary
Late March	- SPS at Overton Park
Early April	- Construct Final Report

Activity Evaluation Plan

There are three main ways our chapter will evaluate the success of our Overton Park Outreach Event. Firstly, we plan to monitor interest in the event via our social media. As Overton Park advertises the event, interested community members may engage with related social media content. Whether via interested parents liking or commenting on our posts, or families reaching out to our public profiles with relevant questions, intended engagement is easy to monitor via our social media. Additionally, we will evaluate the success of our Overton Park Outreach event by noting the number of passersby who engage with the demos, and we will strive to engage with each attendee actively. When conversing, we plan to ask attendees how and why they attended the event (e.g., through social media advertising, passing by while at the park, or a connection to Rhodes College). This communication will help us better understand why current attendees are drawn to our events and how we can increase future attendance in general and for specific groups. This will also help us learn more about the attendees themselves, such as the general age of the children interested in our demos, the general physics knowledge of attendees, and the neighborhoods from which each family may be. Finally, the success of the Overton Park outreach will be apparent in our attendance at future Rhodes SPS outreach events. It would make sense that families who enjoyed their time at the Overton Park event would also be encouraged to attend other Rhodes SPS events open to the public, such as our Egg Drop Competition in the spring or our "Pumpkin Drop" event in the fall. By understanding the interests and demographics of our participants, we hope to enhance future events and encourage families to join us for more Rhodes SPS activities.

Budget Justification

Most of the supplies necessary for our demo day at the park are in our chapter's demo closet. We will primarily be using our own demos for the event, but there are a few things we will need to buy. First, we would like candy. We would like Rolos to freeze in liquid nitrogen—which children love every time we do it—and we would like general mixed candy for the kids to take. Additionally, we need new acetone. We use acetone for our fire tornado demo, which we like to execute at Overton Park each year, and we are out of acetone for the demo. Fire tornado is a successful demo every time we run it, and we do not want to leave it out this year. We would also like small handheld physics toys for the kids to take. This includes small gadgets like clackers, fidgets, and poppers of various sorts. This leaves a positive memory of physics in the kids' minds, and it gives them a physical memoir/toy to take home. Lastly, we would like coffee creamer for our famous liquid nitrogen ice cream. We make liquid nitrogen ice cream at many of our events, and it has become a hallmark Rhodes SPS contribution.