

# Solar fair harnesses young minds

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Wearing protective goggles, Alex Ionesco carefully moved his hands in the shape of an A as he clasped a large magnifying glass, focusing the sun's beam to burn a small piece of wood.

"I can do this at home," said the 11-year-old holding up his finished work.

Ionescu was one of about 250 students, parents and teachers who attended the first **Solar Discovery Faire** at Mark Keppel Elementary School in Glendale on Saturday afternoon.

The fair, sponsored by [Glendale Water & Power](#) and the [Rahus Institute](#) [[Solar Schoolhouse](#)], a nonprofit focused on resource efficiency, taught students how to use the sun to burn wood, power a fountain and make a music box sing.

Students could also make a mini-solar oven that could get up to 200 degrees out of a pizza box using aluminum foil and an oven cooking bag.

David Chase said he planned to take a larger handmade wood and metal model, made with the help of his 5- and 7-year-old sons, on their family camping trip this summer so they can bake cookies in the wild.

"This way we're doing something to engage with our kids and teach them something about the environment," he said.

Across the blacktop, John Muir Elementary teacher Mary Landau was using commercially made solar ovens with four silver panels that looked like petals on a flower to bake fruit compote, potatoes, rice and corn bread.

When she worked at R.D. White Elementary,



*Sara Hersh, 12, from left, Samantha Cook, 10, Tina Tchakian, 14, and Ayden Blackwood, 11, burn a piece of wood with a magnifying glass at Solar Discovery Faire 2012.*



*Ayden Blackwood, 11, writes "I love you, Mom" with a magnifying glass at Solar Discovery Faire 2012.*



*Sherri Lacom, from left, enjoys eating cornbread that was baked from a solar powered oven with her grandchildren Jeremy, 10, and Ayden Blackwood, 12*

Landau used to pick carrots from the school garden and bake them in a solar oven for her students.

“Kids at school loved the carrots, they’d line up for it,” Landau said.

Children were lining up around the solar fountain station, too.

Iris Castro, 5, stepped in front of and to the side of the solar panels manipulating the water with her shadow.

“See it stops completely,” said Yeonsu Kim, a volunteer and junior at Crescenta Valley High School as Iris two-stepped in front of the panel.

“It’s magic,” Iris said.

“No, it’s the sun,” Kim said with a laugh.



*Mary Landau tries to experiment with pancake mix for the first time in a solar powered oven*



*Paul Newland, left, and his father, David, make a family size solar oven at Solar Discovery Faire 2012 [Cheryl A. Guerrero/Staff Photographer / May 12, 2012]*

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