



Don Knight | The Herald Bulletin

Students explain their Rube Goldberg machine to Krieg Binkerd, third from left, during Anderson High School's 100 People for 100 Minutes event on Thursday. The students from left are Michelle Smith, Marissa Childs and Josh Apanavicius.

100 people for 100 minutes showcases ACS achievement

Rube Goldberg contraption inspires student creativity

By Stuart Hirsch
The Herald Bulletin

ANDERSON — As a showcase for student ingenuity at Anderson High School, no display Thursday evening matched the creativity involved with performing the simple task of erasing a blackboard in an entirely unconventional way.

The event was “100 People for 100 minutes” at the high school.

While administrators talked with community leaders about the strides Anderson Community Schools has made in the past couple of years, students who competed in this year's Rube Goldberg competition talked excitedly about their impossibly complex contraption.

And how they missed first place last month by

one point.

“I've done this for the past three years,” said senior Michael Ake. “But I've wanted to do this since I was in the fourth grade.”

Ake is one of seven students who worked for months on the project, after school, at night and on the weekends leading up to the competition, held this year at Purdue College of Technology here.

“This sort of activity allows me to solve problems in strange and unconventional ways,” said Ake, who will attend Purdue University in the fall to pursue a degree in aeronautical and astronomical engineering.

He added that Anderson High's strong advanced placement programs as well as top-notch

math instruction were instrumental in preparing him for the future.

But as his teammate Michelle Smith quickly pointed out, “you don't need to be a rocket scientist to do this.”

She and Marissa Childs, another member of the team, both said they loved the collaboration involved with designing and building the device.

While the trial-and-error nature of making the device work was frustrating at times, Smith said, it was also motivating.

Physics teacher David Perrel, who's served as faculty sponsor for the team since 2006, said he doesn't get tired working with students.

“It's so much fun. Every year we get a brand-new group of kids who are

energized and want to make something that's equal to or better than the year before, Perrel said.

“We give our students a diverse amount of opportunities in our curriculum and extracurricular activities that allow them to be creative,” he added. “The top of our student body is competitive with any other school in the state.”

One of the great rewards at Anderson High, Perrel said, is helping students realize they can succeed and reach their careers they didn't think were open to them.

“Rich kids might have the money, but we have the heart,” Ake said.

Like Stu Hirsch on Facebook and follow him @stuhirsch on Twitter, or call 640-4861.