

## Gainesville High student wins spot in International Science and Engineering Fair for second straight year

For the second year in a row, Gainesville High School student Abhith Kasala has won the top prize in the Alachua Regional Science and Engineering Fair and will be representing Alachua County in the International Science and Engineering Fair in May.

Results of the science fair were announced last night. Kasala, a junior, won first place in the Earth and Environmental Science Senior Division and Best in Show for high school students. His project, entitled 'A Novel Multi-Organism and Computations Approach for Investigating Microplastics' Size and Concentration-Dependent Effects for Translational Human Biomarker Discovery; and Deployment of Plant-Based, Economical, and Scalable Microplastic Remediation Systems' is focused on measuring and limiting the harmful impact of microplastics on the environment, water quality, aquatic organisms and human health.



Kasala has been researching the impact of microplastics and other contaminants since 5<sup>th</sup> grade. An earlier version of his work earned him a third-place award in the 2024 international fair and first place in Florida in the prestigious Stockholm Junior Water Prize competition, which draws tens of thousands of entries from 15- to 20-year-olds from more than 40 nations. He's also won awards in other venues, including the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium and the Health Occupation Students of America competition.



In September of 2024, Kasala was invited to speak at the United Nations Science Summit, where he addressed scientists, legislators and policymakers about his work

Kasala is one of nine Alachua County Public School students who will go on to represent the district in the Florida State Science and Engineering Fair in early April.

Another one of those students is 8th grader Trishaa Urs of Lincoln Middle School, who took first place in the Behavioral Sciences Junior Division and also won Best in Show honors in the Junior Division for her project 'How Does Music Affect Study Performance? A Neuroscience Perspective.' For her project, Urs researched the impact of listening to music on a student's ability to study effectively, including how music affects attention, problem-solving and other cognitive functions.

The ACPS students who have qualified for the State Science and Engineering Fair are:

### Senior Division

Abhith Kasala, Gainesville High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Earth and Environmental Science AND Best in Show)  
Shivi Tripathi, Eastside High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Behavioral Sciences)  
Shiven Sharma, Eastside High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Biomedical Engineering)  
Pranav Mannam, Eastside High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Engineering, Mechanics and Material Science)  
Surya Vaddiparti-Varma, Eastside High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Intelligent Machines, Robotics & Systems Software)  
Hamza Khan, Gainesville High School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Physics)

### Junior Division

Trishaa Urs, Lincoln Middle School (1<sup>st</sup> place, Behavioral Sciences AND Best in Show Juniors)  
Jyotsna Singh, Lincoln Middle School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Chemistry)  
Aradhya Kasala, Bishop Middle School (1<sup>st</sup> Place, Plant Science)

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