Willard Family Science Night
March 23, 2010
Sylvain Barbot, Jamshid Hassanzadeh, Laurie Kovalenko
K – 5th grades

The San Andreas Fault

The auditorium held student science projects, while science activities were in classrooms. Jamshid got his own classroom for rocks and minerals. Sylvain and myself were in a different classroom for earthquakes. There was internet access and a projector. We projected the Pangaea animation on the screen, and had the USGS map "This Dynamic Planet" spread out on a table.

I had maps of California with the San Andreas Fault drawn in. I had the students cut the map along the fault, to dramatize the plate boundary.

We looked at the Pangaea animation to see the plate motion, and compared the speed to fingernail growth (How do you know you fingernails are growing?).

To show the effect of the bend in the San Andreas Fault, they pushed two graham crackers together (edges dipped in water) to see mountain building.

And to demonstrate the different kinds of faults, I used Nina's earthquake fault models. I also related them to the recent earthquakes in Chile (thrust fault) and Haiti (strike-slip fault).

As we were in a different building from the rest of the event, reachable only by crossing the playground, we did not get as many people coming by. But the atmosphere was good. You could talk to kids and their parents for a long time without them getting distracted.