

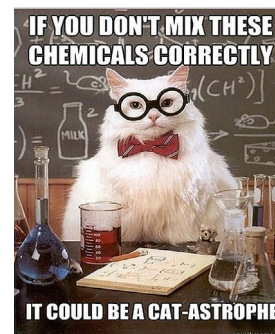
The Accelerator

Summer 2025



ACS
Chemistry for Life®

AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY



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ACS Indiana Local Section 

FOLLOW US ON



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION NIGHT

Enjoy and afternoon filled with food, music, and good company

The Indiana local section's awards committee is taking a new twist on awards night. To better embrace inclusivity, we are hosting a volunteer appreciation night to recognize all of our active volunteers. We extend this invitation to all members in an attempt to inspire you to join a committee! Tickets are \$25 and include 1 free alcoholic beverage (if of age) and 1 free food truck item. Dessert and non-alcoholic drinks are unlimited!

Register Here



EDITOR'S DESK

By Christine Skaggs – Alternate Councilor/Accelerator Editor



The Indiana local section is offering career development in the form of micro-volunteering leadership opportunities. Contact acsinlocal@gmail.com for more information!

Hello all and welcome to this summer's edition of the Accelerator by the Indiana Local Section. My name is Christine Skaggs and I am stepping in as interim editor for the remainder of the year. As a part of the local section's strategic plan, we've been striving to enhance the bidirectional flow of communication between the executive board and you all! The Accelerator is one medium for us to do just that. We are always looking for ways to better engage with you so if you have ideas please reach out to acsinlocal@gmail.com

The local section has recently introduced new communication tools including an email blast system via Hubspot and a revamped website!

Current strategic plan goals center around student engagement via ChemClubs and graduate student organizations, career development supporting micro-volunteering leadership opportunities, and premier programming.

The local section has recently introduced new communication tools including an email blast system via Hubspot and a revamped website!








You're Invited!!!

By Katelyn Caric - Webmaster

Dear ACS Indiana Local Section Members,

We're excited to announce a special event to celebrate the amazing volunteers who help make our society thrive!

-  Volunteer Appreciation Event
-  Date: September 21st, 2025
-  Time: 1-3pm
-  Location: German Park (8600 S Meridian St, Indianapolis, IN 46217)
-  Food & Fun Provided!

This is our way of saying thank you to all the individuals who have generously given their time, energy, and passion to support our events and initiatives. Come enjoy some good food, great music, and fun surprises as we recognize the incredible impact of our volunteers. All members and their families are welcome.

Please RSVP by September 15th using the link below or in the attached flyer!

Looking forward to seeing you there!

CHAIR'S CORNER

By Denise Durham – 2025 IN Local Section Chair



For serving as chair for the Indiana Local Section, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on where we are in relation to our goals and accomplishments midway through this calendar year.

At the beginning of 2025, our local section struggled with low meeting attendance, locating an in-person meeting location, and combating fatigue from all the work that was put forth in previous years. To overcome some of these challenges, we took a necessary step back as a team and had earnest discussions on what programs we wanted to continue to sponsor and paused some programs that we felt could be better served in 2026 or beyond. I believe that this was the best decision that the team made this year because it helped to improve our focus.

Even with streamlining our objectives, we have been able to accomplish the following tasks by midyear:

This section hosted events like Chemistry of Coffee, Chemistry of Cosmetics, and a PREDICT Webinar. We volunteered at the Hoosier Science Fair (pg 14), STEAM Night at Lynhurst 7th and 8th grade center (pg 15), supported Project Seed, and facilitated the UNSCO Exam (pg 3), leading to a Carmel, IN student competing at the national level in Dubai. We improved our budget process by streamlining systems, enhancing transparency, and securing funding from local industries. Recognizing the importance of a healthy budget early in the year was key to maintaining a functional organization. Recently, our local section became finalists for six ChemLuminary Awards. By midyear, we have achieved a lot, focusing on strategic goals and overcoming obstacles. I am proud to be part of this stellar section and look forward to finishing the year strong!

Local Prodigy Heads Abroad to Represent Indiana in the Prestigious Chemistry Olympiad Exam

By National UNSCO Committee

The US National Chemistry Olympiad program is proud to announce the team that will represent the U.S. in the 57th International Chemistry Olympiad on July 5-14, 2025, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. U.S. went on to win 4 gold medals with the Indiana section winning 1 gold medal.

The four members of the U.S. National Chemistry Olympiad (USNCO) team are:

Adam Madni, Carmel High School, IN, **Indiana** Local Section

Yash Shah, Panther Creek High School, NC, North Carolina Local Section

William Wang, Lakeside Upper School, WA, Puget Sound Local Section

Max Zhou, San Marino High School, CA, Southern California Local Section



Where the 2025 Local Presidential Candidate Stands on Science and Innovation

By Christina Bodurow – ACS Fellow 2014



As a proud member of the Indiana ACS Section, I would be honored by your consideration and vote for 2026 ACS President-Elect. My service to the Indiana Section includes serving in the Chair succession (1999-2001), roles in several regional meetings, Chair of the 2013 ACS Indianapolis National Meeting Host Committee, Councilor, and ACS Director (District II). My 40-year career with ACS, including six years on the Board of Directors, along with my industry and academic experiences at Eli Lilly and Company, Butler and IUPUI adjunct professorships, and my passion for ACS success, will be directly integrated into leading our great organization through these challenging times.

My vision as President-Elect focuses on three objectives.

First: Accelerate Interdisciplinary Advancement. We will expand participation in interdisciplinary activities across technical disciplines, ACS units, and membership sectors and ACS meetings, with a focus on scientific innovation.

Second: Expand Industry Engagement. This will be achieved by offering relevant programs and services crucial for industry, addressing global challenges, supporting industry members, and promoting collaboration with academia.

Third: Develop a Chemistry and the Arts Platform to generate positive interest in chemistry and ACS. We will bridge across ACS, and with the public, through the universal language of art and music, highlighting the many ways that chemistry and the arts are interconnected.

I believe in ACS as a transforming force in our world. My professional career and dedicated service to the ACS have been completely integrated. My work with members, staff, governance, and executives across ACS has produced powerful connections and positive outcomes. Working together, we will secure ACS for future generations of chemists, promoting interdisciplinary advancement, industry expansion, and community engagement. The election will be held between September 15-October 10, 2025! Thank you for your support!

Future Leaders, United: Introducing CATALYST @ IUI

By Maddie Page: CATALYST President



CATALYST CATALYST is the ACS Graduate Student Chapter at IU Indianapolis. Founded in 2018 (formerly MOLE), the goal of CATALYST is to serve the chemistry graduate students at IUI by fostering community within the graduate students, promoting academic and professional development, and building relationships with local communities. We have hosted events for the students such as Labsgiving, Christmas parties, professional development lectures, and more. We have been a part of numerous ACS events in the past, and we are looking forward to participating in and volunteering at ACS events this year as a group as well. As graduate students, we have so much to learn from mentors in the field of chemistry; being a part of ACS brings a myriad of opportunities, such as learning new concepts and skills, providing outreach to the community, and connecting with fellow chemists. Typically, around 10-15 students regularly attend CATALYST meetings, but the group is open to all chemistry graduate students at IUI (~50 students) as members and all chemistry staff and faculty at IUI as associate members. For more information click here: <https://catalyst.chem.indianapolis.iu.edu/>

SAVE THE DATE: 2025 CIRCULAR INDIANA CONFERENCE RETURNS THIS FALL

By Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair



We're thrilled to announce that the 2025 Circular Indiana Conference will take place on Monday, September 8, 2025, at the Indiana Government Center. This year's event promises to be our most impactful yet, with an inspiring lineup of speakers—including nationally recognized environmental advocate [Chad Pregracke](#) as our keynote.

The morning session will spotlight Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), a forward-thinking approach on the life cycle of products and specifically how it relates to batteries. Experts will dive into how EPR can drive sustainable design, innovation, and systemic change in Indiana and beyond. In the afternoon, attendees can explore the Circularity Fair, featuring presentations from leading companies and organizations showcasing how they're contributing to a more circular economy right here in Indiana. Fair participants will kick off the session on stage before engaging directly with attendees at interactive exhibits. To close out the day, join us at the Indiana State Museum for a dynamic networking reception—an opportunity to connect with fellow attendees, speakers, and presenters while enjoying drinks and hors d'oeuvres in a vibrant and inspiring setting.

Please [register](#) and mark your calendar—more details coming soon!

INDIANA LOCAL SECTION REPRESENTATION ON TALENTED TWELVE LIST

By Erin Dotlich – Councilor

Since 2015, C&EN has highlighted a dozen early-career scientists annually who make a real-world impact with their chemistry expertise. This year's Talented 12 cohort continues this tradition, advancing solutions for plastics recycling, sustainable agriculture, and more. C&EN readers nominated nearly 370 individuals. Whittling the impressive list of nominees down to only a dozen took a lot of deliberation.

[Dr. Tejas Shah](#), a Discovery Research Scientist with Corteva Agriscience, is recognized in the "[Talented Twelve list](#)" for automating chemistry to ensure food security. He established Corteva's first chemistry automation and high-throughput experimentation group, using computational tools to discover a new herbicide. Shah, who earned his Ph.D. in organic chemistry from UCLA in 2016 under the guidance of Dr. Neil Garg, has made significant research breakthroughs on projects spanning total synthesis, strained intermediate chemistry, and amide C–N bond activation chemistry. In addition, Shah was deeply involved in educational outreach, leadership, and mentoring. He played a key role in developing BACON (Biology and Chemistry Online Notes) tutorials, which connect organic chemistry concepts to human health and pop culture, making the subject more accessible and engaging for students. chemists use for reaction and catalyst screening. After a few years in discovery chemistry, Shah pitched his idea to create an automation and high-throughput experimentation group. In short order he had a multimillion-dollar budget, a research group, and a new lab to kit out. Using robotics and informatics, the group can more than double the number of new small molecules for discovery. More recently, he's applied another cutting-edge method to agrochemistry: generative artificial intelligence. Shah explains that developing a new product usually takes 13–15 years, similar to the timeline for a new drug. An important difference is that a new threat can appear quickly—for instance, a pest expanding its range because of climate change.

To read more about Tejas's contributions, continue here: [2025 Talented 12: Tejas Shah](#)



Shining Star of Service: 2025 Volunteer of the Year

By Alex Tamerius – MU Student Chapter Sponsor

I am deeply humbled to be the recipient of the 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award. My passion for science was ignited by science outreach activities that I attended as a child and cultivated by the excellent mentors that I have had throughout my education. The culmination of these experiences is a deep appreciation for the impact that frequent outreach and quality mentorship can have on one's passion and career trajectory. Thus, I am deeply dedicated to sparking that same love of science for others and cultivating the next generation of well-trained and well-rounded scientists and physicians.



In addition to my formal education in materials chemistry research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (B.S.) with Daniel Fredrickson, I had the opportunity to work with Jim Maynard and Basam Shakhashiri and gain incredible experience with science communication that I carried with me to Northwestern University (Ph.D.). While there, I not only honed my materials research expertise with Danna Freedman (now at M.I.T.), Stephen Jacobsen, and the High-Pressure research teams at Argonne and Brookhaven National Laboratories but also deepened my passion for teaching and learning alongside Veronica Burns, Stephanie Knezz, and the Searle Center for Advancing Teaching & Learning.

These opportunities gave me the skills that I needed to continue to do what I love as a faculty member at Marian University. I find immense joy in teaching and mentoring my students at Marian University. Through Chemistry Club, we have had the opportunity to broaden our impact through annual ACS events and support. Seeing my students discover the fulfillment that comes with science outreach has been deeply meaningful. I am unendingly grateful to the Indiana Local Section for not only recognizing our successes but also making them possible through the connections and collaborations that have had an immense impact on my research, my students' careers, and our impact on the community.

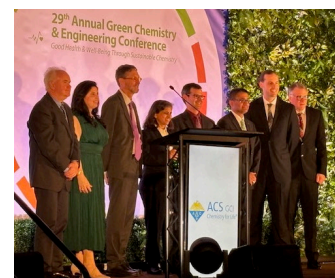
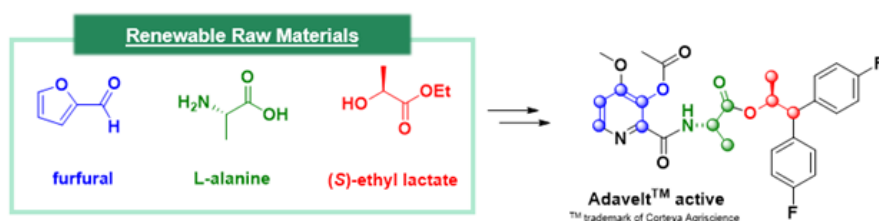


National & Noteworthy: Meet the Changemakers

2025 Peter J. Dunn Award for Green Chemistry & Engineering Impact in the Pharmaceutical Industry awarded to Corteva

By Erin Dotlich – Councilor

Corteva was awarded for “A Sustainably-Designed Manufacturing Process to Adavelt™ Active from Renewable Feedstocks.” The Corteva team clearly demonstrated the design of an efficient manufacturing process for Adavelt™ active, with sustainability as a core focus. They adopted green chemistry principles to maximize yield, reduce waste, and deliver a cost-effective solution for farmers. Building upon the first-generation supply route, they developed a process that eliminated three protecting groups, four steps, the use of precious metals, and replaced undesirable reagents with greener alternatives while producing an active ingredient effective against 20 diseases in over 30 crops.



Adavelt(TM) process

Their manufacturing process reduced waste generation by 92% and incorporates three renewable feedstocks (furfural, alanine and ethyl lactate), increasing the renewable carbon content for the active ingredient to 41% compared to the first-generation process. The Corteva team includes Nicholas Babij, Nakyen Choy, Megan Cismesia, David Couling, Nicole Hough, Yamini Krishnan, Caroline Long, Adriane Miller, Mark Muehlfeld, and Greg Whiteker.

2025 AACT Teacher of the Year Award Winner

By AACT on June 4, 2025



Each year, AACT recognizes K–12 educators with the *Teacher of the Year* award. Through their pedagogy, dedication, skills, and accomplishments, these teachers make outstanding contributions to the chemistry teaching profession and AACT.

Nora Walsh teaches on-level, honors, and AP Chemistry at FJ Reitz High School in Evansville, IN. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in chemistry from Emory University and a master's degree in secondary science education from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She is an associate editor for Chemical Education Xchange, an AP Chemistry reader, an AP Chemistry Mentor, and has presented several webinars for ChemEd X and the American Association of Chemistry Teachers. She is also a 2023 and 2025 PAEMST Finalist for Indiana. She is passionate about supporting teachers on their journey to take their existing classrooms and evolve them to meet new challenges and better meet students where they are. She is invigorated by collaboration and is very active in teacher learning networks on social media, including X, Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. Follow her @reitzchemistry.

Spice Up Your Creativity! ACS Illustrated Poem Contest – Theme: The Hidden Life of Spices

By: Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair

Do you know any children that have a passion for art, poetry, or science? Here's your chance to have them blend all three in the 2025 Illustrated Poem Contest, sponsored by the Indiana Local Section of the American Chemical Society! We're inviting all K–12 students to explore the rich, surprising stories behind the spices we use every day. From fiery peppers to fragrant cloves, what secrets might your spice reveal?

Submission Deadline: Wednesday, October 24, 2025, by 11:59 PM ET

Email entries to: Linda Osborn: lindavosborn@gmail.com

Prizes awarded in each age group: 1st Place: \$100, 2nd Place: \$50, 3rd Place: \$25

But that's not all—Indiana's top poem will advance to the National ACS Illustrated Poem Contest for a chance to be featured on the ACS website and win even more national recognition! Unleash their imagination, make science beautiful, and let their voice be heard—one rhyme (and one drawing) at a time. Please see the rules for the contest below.

To access the flyer and the submission form, please visit the [ACS, Indiana Section Website](#).

Write and illustrate a poem using the NCW theme, "The Hidden Life of Spices." Your poem must be **no more** than 40 words and in the following styles to be considered:

HAIKU - LIMERICK - ODE - ABC POEM - FREE VERSE - END RHYME - BLANK VERSE

Possible topics related to the theme include:

- The Science of Spices and Herb
- Growing Spices at Home
- Herbs that heal people and Earth
- How molecules scent in spices work
- A world tour through spice-rich cuisines
- Turmeric's golden hue



Entries will be judged based upon:

- Artistic Merit - use of color, quality of drawing, design, and layout
- Poem Message - fun, motivational, inspiring about yearly theme
- Originality Creativity - unique, clever and/or creative design
- Neatness - free of spelling and grammatical errors

Contest rules:

- All poems must be no more than 40 words, and in one of the following styles to be considered: Haiku, Limerick, Ode, ABC poem, Free verse, End rhyme, and Blank verse.
- Entries are judged based upon relevance to and incorporation of the NCW theme, word choice and imagery, colorful artwork, adherence to poem style, originality and creativity, and overall presentation.
- All entries must be original works without aid from others. Poems may be submitted by hand on an unlined sheet of paper not larger than 11" by 14" or scanned and sent via email. Illustrations may be created using crayons, watercolors, other types of paint, colored pencils or markers. The illustration may also be electronically created by using a digital painting and drawing app on a computer, tablet, or mobile device.
- The text of the poem should be easy to read and may be typed before the hand-drawn or digital illustration is added, or the poem may be written on lined paper, which is cut out and pasted onto the unlined paper with the illustration.
- No clipart or unoriginal images can be used.
- Only one entry per student will be accepted; all entries must include an entry form. If the illustration is created using a digital painting or drawing app, the name of the program must be included on the entry form.
- Acceptance of prizes constitutes consent to use winners' first name, and entry for editorial, advertising, and publicity purposes.
- Do not place participant names on the front of your poem.

WHERE ART MEETS SCIENCE

By Christine Skaggs - Alternate Councilor/Accelerator Editor

The Science Coaches program, an outreach initiative by the American Chemical Society (ACS) and the American Association of Chemistry Teachers (AACT), pairs professional chemists with schoolteachers to bring real-world science into classrooms. Launched in 2010 with 32 partnerships, the program has grown to about 250 partnerships for the 2024-25 school year. The initiative aims to ignite students' interest in chemistry by providing firsthand exposure to scientific careers and real-life applications. The program has led to increased student engagement, with some students pursuing internships and unique projects inspired by their classroom experiences.



Gregory Smith, a conservation scientist at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, has made significant contributions through the Science Coaches program. In the fall of 2023, he helped high school students at The Thacher School in California examine the fiber content of a forged Moroccan embroidery using polarized light microscopy. This hands-on experience allowed students to understand the application of forensic science in art conservation. Smith's collaboration with Thacher science teacher Christopher Vyhna has led to increased student engagement and interest in chemistry. For example, one student pursued a paid summer internship with local art conservators, while another converted a computer camera into an infrared camera for art analysis as their capstone project, with remote assistance from Smith. Smith's efforts have also extended beyond the classroom. Classroom activities resulting from his partnership with Vyhna have been published in chemistry education journals. Additionally, Vyhna spent a six-week sabbatical with Smith and his team at the museum, analyzing paintings and developing classroom resources. To read more on the program click here: [Science Coaches program pairs chemists with schoolteachers](#)

A Legacy of Science, History, and Community: Dr. Larry Sernyk's Everlasting Influence

By: Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair

Most people reading this blog likely know Dr. Larry Sernyk—an honorary sustaining member of the Science Education Foundation of Indiana and a dedicated contributor to science outreach. His involvement spans organizations such as the American Chemical Society (ACS) Indiana Section, STEM Fest, Girl Scouts, You Be the Chemist, ISEF, and Junior Achievement Job Spark—and likely many more! In July 2023, Larry moved from Indianapolis to Red Oak II, Missouri, and though his contributions to science outreach were well known in Indiana, I had no idea just how much he had going on in Missouri—until my husband, Gary, and I visited him at the end of May.

A Man of Many Passions

Larry is now on the board of directors and serves as treasurer of the Route 66 Association of Missouri, an organization deeply connected to one of America's most historic highways. One of the must-see stops on Route 66 is [Red Oak II](#), where Larry lives in the White Oak Creek Civil War House. It was one of only 6 houses left standing in this area after the Civil War and was moved to Red Oak II 1992 where it was restored. But that's just the beginning, he also owns a number of other buildings in the town, including The Dalton Gang House, a restored log cabin built in 1938 that was used as the first temporary courthouse in Jasper County in 1841, a train station, Fort Hooker, The Red Barn, and other historic properties, most of which were painstakingly moved to the Red Oak II property as well as the La Grange school which is located just South West of Red Oak II. Built in 1868, the old stone schoolhouse was restored by Larry to its original condition.



A drone photo of Red Oak II, June 2024.

One of his newest projects is the construction of a fabulous art gallery to showcase the work of the late Lowell Davis, a visionary artist, creator of Red Oak II, and close friend of Larry's. Larry also enjoys giving tours of Red Oak II, sharing their rich history, and inspiring visitors to explore these hidden gems. A few others own all the other historical buildings and are part of this historic community.

But his passion for education isn't fading—he plans to host STEM activities for kids inside a large gazebo on his property at Red Oak II, continuing his lifelong mission of making science accessible and exciting for future generations. Larry says, "A lot of families visit Red Oak II throughout the year and thus it will provide a great STEM outreach opportunity which will reach a wide audience of all ages and it's just across the road from my house."

Gratitude for a Legacy of Service

Larry's unwavering dedication to science education has touched countless lives, and his generosity continues to inspire us all. We are incredibly grateful to Larry and all our dedicated volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make Celebrate Science Indiana such a success each year. Their passion for outreach and commitment to scientific literacy are what make this event truly special.

Celebrating Science, Honoring Larry

With that spirit in mind, Celebrate Science Indiana is set to take place on October 11, 2025, from 9:30 AM to 5 PM at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, Exposition Hall.

Larry hopes to be able to attend this year's Celebrate Science Indiana with his Space Weather/Aurora Science booth. If you are inspired by Larry and would like to [attend](#), [exhibit](#), [sponsor](#), or [volunteer](#), please click the respective link—we hope to see you on October 11! Honoring excellence! Larry receives the ACE Initiative Award from the American Chemical Society, Indiana Section—presented by Linda Osborn during her visit.



ONCE UPON A GREEN CLASSROOM: INSPIRING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STORYTELLING

By Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair

Storytelling helps young people emotionally connect with sustainability and the circular economy. Stories illustrate the impact of individual choices, community innovation, and the possibility of a better future, empowering youth to act and imagine solutions. Adding hands-on experiments after stories deepens understanding by making abstract ideas tangible, reinforcing key concepts through direct observation and problem-solving. This experiential learning boosts retention, sparks curiosity, and builds confidence, making the learning process engaging and memorable, turning inspiration into action. This is the inspiration behind the activities conducted for the past two years organized by the Senior Chemists Committee. We will continue this event throughout 2025, so if you know an Indiana school teacher, the rest is easy!

- ACS Volunteers across the State of Indiana:
 - Reach out to an Indiana K-9 school or directly with a teacher that you know and schedule a trip to visit a classroom of students:
 - Read an age-appropriate book about sustainability in the classroom or excerpts depending on the story length.
 - Conduct a short, hands-on activity with the students related to sustainability and discuss the relevance of the story.
 - With permission, take photos.
 - Submit a 1-page report from a template



This event can happen anytime during the school year at your convenience! E-mail Linda at lindavosborn@gmail.com for more information. Knowing a teacher helps, but you can also reach out to a school near you. For the protection of the students, ACS and most schools require background checks. We'd like to thank the many individuals who have contributed their time and effort to making this event a success. Brian Mathes, Chris and Renee Welch, Kelvin Okamoto, Alan Schmidt, Matt Russell, Denise Durham, Andrea Moberly, David Berberich, Ken Miller, Wendy Tomamichel, Christine Skaggs, Hannah Zimmerman-Federle, and Linda Osborn have all played important roles. If you have any questions, suggestions, or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of them — they're happy to help.

WHERE PASSION MEETS PURPOSE: LAUNCHING THE MU STUDENT CHAPTER

By Alex Tamerius – MU Student Chapter Sponsor



The Marian University Chemistry Club was founded in 2023 and awarded the Outstanding New Student Organization Award in 2024 for our contributions to Marian and the broader community. We have been proud to participate in a wide range of outreach activities across Indiana furthering our mission "to create an environment of opportunities for students pursuing chemistry related fields. Our aim is to provide students with professional experience, while making a positive impact on the community. We hope to foster intellectual stimulation for chemical science, and awareness of the responsibilities and challenges of the modern chemist.

We also aim to inspire the next generation of scientists by through community building at Marian University and K-12 science outreach." We held several community building events and had hands-on activity booths and several science outreach events for K-12 audiences. Some of our favorite annual events are National Chemistry Week at the Children's Museum, Celebrate Science Indiana, Ball State Science Day, and our own Mole Day Demo Show hosted at Marian University. We have enjoyed bringing science experiments to the 2024 Marian University Solar Eclipse Viewing Party and various other venues through collaborations across campus and the greater Indianapolis area. As the Advisor for the Club, I am proud of my students for their efforts in building a supportive community of undergraduate students and sparking a love of science in others. This Fall we will be entering our third year, and we are looking forward to deepening our collaborations and growing our impact.



ACS After Retirement

By Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair



Q: Can you tell us a little about yourself and your connection to ACS?

A: I'm originally from St. Bernard, Ohio, and attended Marian College from 1973 to 1977. After a year of teaching at St. Michael's Grade School, I was invited to join the lab at DA Lubricant Company. About six years later, when the lab was shut down, a friend encouraged me to apply for a position with The Heritage Group. At that point, I hadn't taken a single college chemistry course. Fortunately, I was hired to work in the GC lab, and I began taking evening classes in chemistry—eventually earning my BS in Chemistry from the University of Indianapolis.

I spent the next chapter of my career with Heritage Environmental Services, and later Heritage Research Group, where I retired as Director of Analytical Services at the end of 2023. I first joined ACS in 1986, but I didn't discover the wealth of local section activities until 2012. That year, Dr. Sibel Selcuk, then Chair of our local section, invited me to get

involved in planning for the 2013 ACS National Meeting in Indianapolis. It was through those early experiences that I truly began to understand and appreciate all that ACS membership offers.

Throughout my career, ACS has been a source of growth, leadership, and connection—and that hasn't changed in retirement. I still read *C&EN*, stay active in the local section, and continue to find fulfillment in staying connected to the chemistry community. Stepping away from full-time work was a major transition; my career was a big part of my identity. Staying involved with ACS keeps me connected to the people and topics that still matter deeply to me.

Q: Why do you continue to stay involved with ACS after retirement?

A: Two of my greatest passions are encouraging young people to get excited about STEM and helping them understand the importance of sustainability. I believe that early exposure to science—especially when it's hands-on and connected to real-world challenges, can ignite a lifelong curiosity and sense of purpose. Through ACS, I've had the opportunity to support programs and events that introduce students to chemistry in engaging, meaningful ways.

I'm especially drawn to efforts that connect STEM education with sustainability and the circular economy. When young people see how science can be used to solve pressing environmental problems, they begin to see themselves as part of the solution. Whether it's through storytelling, experiments, or mentoring, I find deep fulfillment in helping the next generation of scientists and changemakers find their voice and their path. ACS gives me a platform to keep doing that—even in retirement.

Q: What do you gain from continued involvement with ACS?

A: One of the most rewarding aspects is getting to work alongside so many talented, intelligent, and generous people. I'm continually inspired by individuals who have given so much of their time, talents, energy, and passion to support ACS and the broader chemistry community. Their dedication is contagious—and it motivates me to keep contributing in any way I can. As long as I'm able to give, I feel excited about doing so. Whether it's through mentoring, organizing programs, or simply showing up to support others, I find purpose and joy in staying active. It's energizing to be part of a community that values collaboration, service, and the power of science to make a difference. It's a real privilege to be part of a local section that's as vibrant, active, and passionate as this one — I'm proud to call it my community, and I encourage all our members to dive in, get involved, and help us make it even stronger.



ChemLuminary Award Finalists

By Christine Skaggs – Alternate Councilor/Accelerator Editor

It's that time of year again. I can smell the cellophane of our upcoming victories in this year's ChemLuminary Awards banquet. These awards are provided annually to honor the service of our volunteer's, their successes in their execution of events from the previous year. Categories of awards revolve around programming, outreach, operations, and regional meetings for participating local sections, divisions, and international chapters. The Indiana local section is on a hot streak receiving "Outstanding Performance by a Local Section – Large Category" two years running and has received a finalist nomination for 2024's leadership and volunteer base. Despite COVID-19, the section has brought home 14 total awards over the last five years with a record-breaking win last year of 5 total wins. This year is no exception with the section being finalists for 5 category awards and Best Local Section. See below for more details. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers for their contributions. Congratulations to all!



Event Title	Committee Chair(s) Names and Affiliations	Event Description
Once Upon a Green Classroom	Linda Osborn - Retired	Excitement and wonder filled the room as our Indiana Local Section Volunteers brought a storybook to life. Using an age-appropriate book focused on sustainability, the initiative aimed to introduce children to the importance of protecting our environment, conserving resources, and living harmoniously with nature. *2023 ChemLuminary Event Winner
Chemistry of Art @ Newfields	Greg Smith - Newfields	Chemistry and Art share a rich interface that is rarely recognized by students who are often taught that the two disciplines represent distinct worldviews. High school chemistry teachers were invited to spend the day behind the scenes in the Indianapolis Museum of Art conservation science laboratory exploring the role that science plays in the creation, preservation, and authentication of artworks.
Juneteenth	Jade Bing – Corteva, Al Prusinowski – Corteva, Alex Tamerius – Marian University	One day event to teach about what is it like being a scientist, the significance of Juneteenth, and the importance of celebrating and promoting the success of Black People in our communities. It aimed to celebrate progress made, while recognizing the continued need for equity advancement. Together, we reached families in our local community, taught chemistry and history of Juneteenth, and provided a space to celebrate diversity in a way that is empowering and inspiring for our future generations.
Chemistry of Bourbon	Christine Skaggs – Eli Lilly and Company, Hannah Zimmerman – Federle - Corteva	Evening event designed to highlight women's contributions to the distilling field, a predominately male field bringing together local women-based STEM organizations, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) and Women and Hi Tech (W&HT), to celebrate these successes, create new networking opportunities and a support system for our women chemists.
Exceptional Leaders Conference	Christine Skaggs – Eli Lilly and Company, Hannah Zimmerman – Federle – Corteva, IUI Graduate Student Chapter (Kymeri Davis, Eray Schulz, Mikayla Metzger)	One day event aimed at improving professional and leadership skills at the Local Section level for volunteer leaders and showcasing technical work that is occurring within local industries and universities.

Hoosier Science and Engineering Fair Honors “Best Use of Chemistry”

By: Linda Osborn – Senior Chemists Committee Chair

On April 5, Indiana University Indianapolis School of Science hosted the 2025 Hoosier Science and Engineering Fair (HSEF), sponsored by the Science Education Foundation of Indiana (SEFI). Established in 1964, SEFI supports Indiana students in reaching the National Science Fair. The State Science Fair began in 1988, and since then, thousands of Indiana's most promising young scientists have presented their research to professional and academic judges.

A special thank-you goes to **Kymeri Davis** for once again judging the American Chemical Society's “Best Use of Chemistry” Awards. We also extend our sincere thanks to the 148 judges who volunteered their time and expertise to make the event a success.

This year, 198 students participated in the fair, bringing an impressive level of creativity, curiosity, and scientific rigor. Congratulations to all of them, and especially to these ACS “Best use of Chemistry” award recipients:

First Place: Rohan Bhosale, Carmel High School

Project: Sustainable Biofuel Production through Multimode Biocatalysis Using Enzymes Extracted and Concentrated from Household Waste

Second Place: Kris Lau, Signature School Inc.

Project: Comparative Evaluation of Zinc Oxide Nanoparticles Synthesized via Green and Chemical Methods

Third Place: Achyut Ethiraj, Carroll High School

Project: Investigating the Role of Homologous Template DNA on the Efficiency of CRISPR-Cas9 in Inducing Resistance to Streptomycin in *E. coli*

Rohan Bhosale also received the Top Young Scientist award for the Senior Division and earned numerous other honors at HSEF. At the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, Rohan was awarded a 2nd Place Grand Award in Biochemistry — a remarkable achievement.

All senior-level HSEF participants will be invited to take part in the ACS “Think Like a Molecule” Poster Session, designed to inspire deeper thinking and celebrate molecular science.

We commend every student, educator, and parent involved in this year's event. Your dedication continues to foster a love for science and innovation across our state.



From left to right: Kris Lau, Achyut Ethiraj, and Rohan Bhosale

Champions of the Classroom

By: Ashley Pepelea – Lynhurst 7th and 8th Grade Science Department Chair



Students must have opportunities to envision their futures. That's why partnerships between schools and organizations like the American Chemical Society (ACS) are critical to developing our future workforce.

At Lynhurst 7th and 8th Grade Center in the MSD of Wayne Township, our mission is to inspire curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity through STEM education. We strive to equip every student with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to solve real-world problems in an ever-changing world. Through hands-on learning, collaborative projects, and connections to STEM careers, we prepare students not just to thrive—but to make a difference.

We've had the privilege of partnering with the ACS to support our mission of expanding STEM opportunities for our students. The ACS has enriched our community by engaging students in inquiry-based activities, such as acid/base reaction experiments and demonstrations of matter using a plasma ball at our STEM Community Night. Students not only participated in exciting hands-on activities but also had the opportunity to speak directly with professionals from the scientific community.



Additionally, the ACS brought a diverse panel of volunteers from various STEM fields to meet with our AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) students. These volunteers shared their educational backgrounds, current roles, and personal experiences in STEM, including the challenges and successes they've encountered. The panel sparked thoughtful discussion and curiosity among our students, leading to meaningful questions and conversations.

Following the panel, volunteers led small-group experiments, allowing students to continue engaging in hands-on learning while building connections with STEM professionals. We are extremely grateful to the American Chemical Society for providing our students with such impactful and inspiring opportunities.

