[GRG Newsletter Summer 2021]

Greetings!

We've come out of our pandemic hibernation to reach out and say hello. It finally feels like we are turning a very big corner, as our country begins to "open up" after 15 months of mask wearing (and fogging of glasses), physical distancing, endless ZOOM calls, economic and social turmoil, and uncertainty – and some unease – about what life 'post-COVID' will look like. We are fortunate that GRG was able to continue our evaluation and other research projects during this time. We do look forward to resuming some of our pre-pandemic evaluation activities, such as traveling to visit programs in action and collecting data in person.

Karen Gareis, GRG's Senior Research Associate and Director of Professional Development, keeps us apprised of various evaluation PD resources, among other interesting posts. I wanted to share this post that Karen shared with us of data visualization that highlight how racial (and other types) of inequality can make a dramatic point.

https://stephanieevergreen.com/4-chart-types-that-fight-for-equality/?__s=ggas3euhpyktr0373qx6

We hope you are healthy and can enjoy the summer of '21.
Cheers,
Irene

Our Newest Project

We're extremely pleased to have been selected in early June to serve as external evaluator/researcher for a multi-platform public media initiative being developed by **WNET**, the flagship PBS station in New York City, with support from the **Corporation for Public Broadcasting**. They have just launched ***American Graduate: Path to the Future,*** which will help youth ages 13 to 18 in diverse communities across America explore and prepare for high-demand careers in the post-COVID-19 economy, including the 30 million middle skill jobs that require a one-year occupational certificate or two-year Associate's degree.

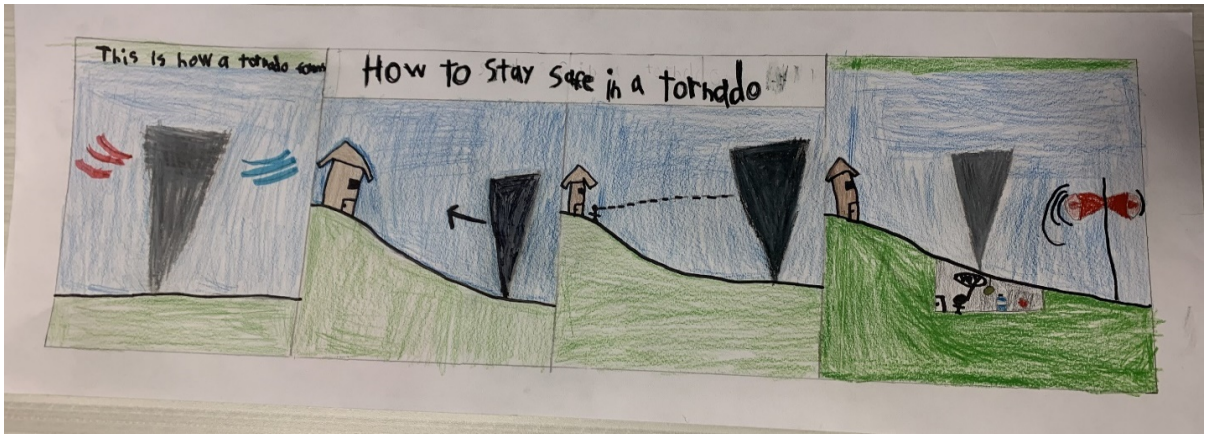
News about Some of Our Current Clients

Congratulations to our clients from the ***Young Mathematicians (YM)*** project at EDC for winning a Public Choice award in this year's STEM for All Video Showcase! Funded by the National Science Foundation, this year's videos highlight strategies to engage students during COVID and address educational inequities. The **YM** project promotes strong school-family partnerships and parent-child communication by supporting parents to extend their children's mathematics learning at home. The team uses a formative design approach to co-create, test, and refine activities to ensure they are engaging and enjoyable for users, which is especially critical during this global health crisis that has exacerbated existing inequalities. You can view their award-winning video here: https://videohall.com/p/2154

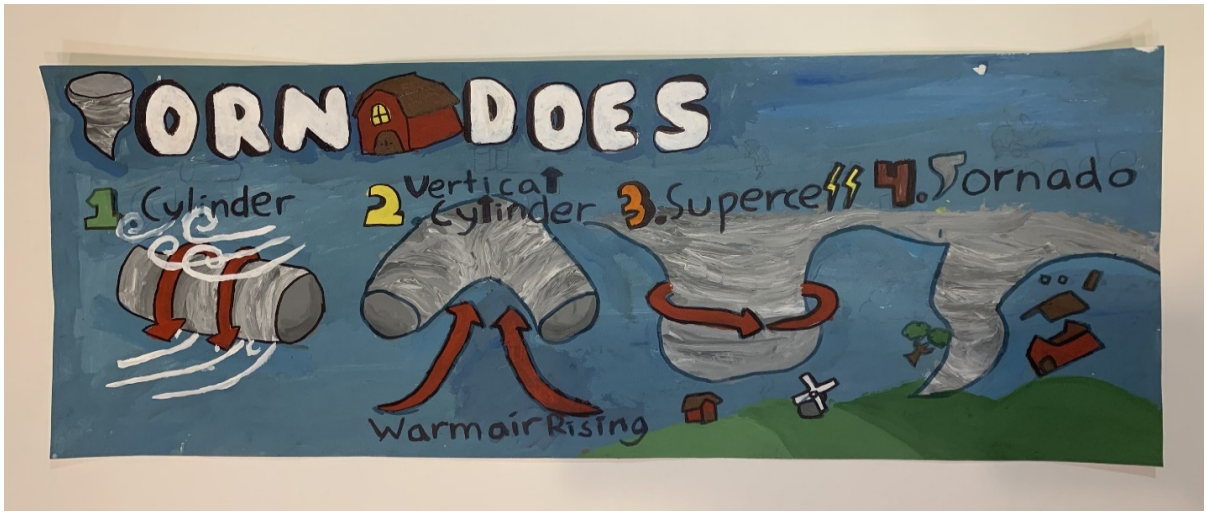
Project manager Karen Gareis and grad intern Skyler Yin recently sat on the judging panel for this year's ***Cool Science Art Competition*** (coolscience.net). K-12 students from Massachusetts, Kansas, and Missouri created artwork responding to a set of challenge questions, including adapting to extreme weather, how severe storms form, and how communities can prepare for flooding. A panel of 15-18 Cool Science researchers and advisors judged the art on criteria including scientific accuracy, creativity and aesthetic

appeal, clarity of message, and ability to engage the viewer. It was fun to see the artwork, and hard to choose the winners! There was a lot of interesting discussion. Here are some of the winners who addressed the “severe storms” question:

Elementary School Winner, Kansas City, 4th grader



Elementary School Winner, Merrimack Valley, 5th grader



High School Winner, Topeka, 9th grader

GRG is thrilled that our clients from the ***NASA's Universe of Learning (UoL)*** project were among those selected to implement the next phase of NASA's Science Activation (SciAct) program. *NASA's UoL* is a partnership between the Space Telescope Science Institute, Caltech/IPAC, Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian, and NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory. In 2016, *NASA's UoL* was one of 27 cooperative agreements selected by NASA's Science Mission Directorate to implement a new strategic approach to more effectively and efficiently incorporate NASA science experts and content into the learning environment for learners of all ages. In September 2020, the *NASA's UoL* project was one of 21 of the original awardees, along with nine new awardees, selected for funding through 2026. GRG is looking forward to continuing to support the team through strategic learning and evaluation, with our Director of Research, Colleen Manning, serving as lead evaluator. See https://www.universe-of-learning.org/

Other Tidbits

Our recent client, Daniel Rockmore, of Dartmouth College, just had an article published in *The New Yorker* about his father – part personal history and part explanation of physics theorems. It's a very interesting read! https://www.newyorker.com/science/elements/my-fathers-theorem?utm_source=nl&utm_brand=tny&utm_mailing=TNY_Daily_062021&utm_campaign=aud-dev&utm_medium=email&bxid=5bd66d482ddf9c619437e29b&cndid=11777682&hasha=faea5e2c3ae571fd39de4dc3902e9e7d&hashb=194b1335499dab51e0a0ae44b781f8bb0edff2a9&hashc=4394 1b61931524073cb0a062fee1f1035eae3b2fe1d5bf559b47c7307c423e09&esrc=&mbid=CRMNYR012019&utm_content=A&utm_term=TNY_Daily

During the COVID-19 lockdown, jigsaw puzzles saw a big resurgence and we – like a lot of other folks across the globe– were drawn into this fun activity. Given our work with the aforementioned *NASA's Universe of Learning* project, we decided to put together a holographic "motion" puzzle of the moon landing that turned out to be rather challenging. [wrap text around photo]

Saying Goodbye to Grad Intern Skyler Yin

Skyler has been a real asset to GRG since summer 2020 as a graduate intern and will soon be returning to China. This spring, she presented her research at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2021 Annual Meeting~~, with a focus on the current understanding, challenge, and effort made in early childhood education (ECE) in rural and poverty-stricken areas in China~~. In her case study, Skyler explored how four teachers in rural Chinese villages approach emotion talk in the classroom shared storybook readings. Overall, she found that emotion talk is extremely rare in rural classrooms. Teachers brought up affectively *positive* emotion utterances more often, whereas they used affectively *negative* emotions more in in-depth discussions with students. Teachers were more comfortable having low-level emotion talk (i.e., *comment on or label* emotion utterances). Even in classrooms where emotion talk occurred more frequently, teachers varied in their skills of facilitating high-level emotion talk (i.e., using emotion utterances to *question, explain, guide,* or *socialize)*. Learning outcomes and student engagement also varied as teaching strategies differed. Skyler hopes to use her research findings to inform future professional development and curriculum designed for Chinese teachers in low-resource areas on how to diversify teachers' emotion teaching strategies, and how to better support children's social emotional development.

Our best wishes to Skyler as she embarks on the next stage of her life journey!