



Thirsty for science? The Young Minds PONYS are here to “Parla Potabile”!

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The Young Minds program has public-outreach of physics and science as one of its major goals as a global connecting hub for students and early-career physicists. Every year, many of our student-run chapters (sections) surprise us with astonishing new ideas for reaching out to people and specially school students, with a range of enjoyable, inspirational, and educational activities. In this issue we are proud to spotlight this unique grand science festival organized by the Physics and Optics Naples Young Students (PONYS) in its second edition.



For the second year in a row, PONYS topped-up our expectations with the “Parla Potabile: La Scienza Per Tutt3” event which took place this time in the middle of Naples-Italy at the cultural center “Scugnizzo Liberato”. As the name refers (“Speaking drinkable” as a metaphor for “make it easy”), the event aimed to offer the people of Naples and many groups of school students and kids, an extraordinary experience with scientific experiments, exhibits, shows, and games making physics as easy as never before. The scientific festival served also as a platform to bring together various associations, professors, and researchers, who were invited to showcase their own engaging outreach activities.

During the two-days festival (18-19th of April 2023), visitors got the chance to expand their knowledge of

physics and science with the many interactive live-experiments organized in more than twenty captivating STEM-themed stands. The heart of the festival laid in these stands where a lot of exciting talks also took place. The stands prepared by PONYS in particular focused in the themes on Optics, Mechanics, Microwaves, and Fire; providing a series of simple experiments which aim to explain some basic concepts of physics and to spark the curiosity of the audience. Additionally, 20 collaborating associations from Federico II University presented a plethora of activities, like interactive stands, board games and talks; covering a wide spectrum of themes, such as particle physics,





mathematics, biology, and geology. This diverse array of exhibits ensured that attendees can explore and appreciate the fascinating realms of different scientific disciplines.

In a much developed design than the first edition, Parla Potabile (2022), the scientific escape room was again a hit with themed riddles in additional new rooms and stories where people had to use what they learned in all stands and their intuition to save the world! The challenges in the rooms this time were designed to be played in 5-6 people groups offering a unique adventure, fostering teamwork and critical thinking skills.

Did you think the PONYS were done with the fun? Then wait to hear about the “Quantum Game”(1). Developed by the IBM researchers, the game Entanglion continued to steal people’s attention in this edition as well. It is a cooperative board game based on quantum computation. It offers an interactive and educational experience, bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications. They were not finished here, because this year’s special new game “AEON – The Emergence of life”(2) took the players to think at a whole different level. It was developed by scientists in the framework of the CRC 235 “Emergence of Life” funded by the

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) and published by the Deutsches Museum. It’s a board game about the origin of life on early Earth, and for such topic the joining associations specialized in biology helped explain the fundamentals of life, while our PONYS members dealt with the importance of energy and reaction in the story.

The limits of “interactive” festival did not stop here. The electronics lab was a great addition that gave people the true hands-on experience with basic concepts of electromagnetism and circuits. They got the chance as well to build their own small electro-scope which they kept as a memory of the day.

Last but not least, and since children and school student are the team’s focus to inspire and spark science in their little hearts and minds, the PONYS members volunteered to present a thirty minutes show, in which they read fairy tails punctuated by little experiments of acoustic and optics to discover the 3D world and dimensionality. The tales were made for the children to extrapolate the scientific concept, which is further explained and deepened with a conjugate experiment.

The first day could not end for PONYS and attendees without dancing, and catching up on the music

of the Scalzbanda band whose members are oriented to promote inclusion and social integration through music.

The event was concluded in the second day with the rhythms of the the Scugnizzo Liberato’s music band “Basaglia” while enjoying an exhibition which created a moment of connection between the audience, all the present volunteers and professors.

We cannot be more proud of and thankful for PONYS and all other collaborating associations for this truly unforgettable science festival that must have watered the visitors’ thirst for science and discoveries. We look eagerly to the third edition of Parla Potabile, and for the great science to be presented. ■

References

- [1] <https://entanglion.github.io/>
- [2] <https://aeon-game.eu/about/>

