

SPIE Professional: Bonus Web Content

Lab in Thailand Reaches Out with SPIE Grant

SPIE member Sarun Sumriddetchkajorn bring optics education alive.

Three high school optical science projects in Thailand have made the cut for the 2009 National Young Scientist Competition, thanks in part to mentoring by Sarun Sumriddetchkajorn, director of the [Photonics Technology Laboratory](#) at the National Electronics and Computer Technology Center.

Sumriddetchkajorn, a recipient of a 2008 SPIE Outreach Grant, visited 10 high schools this year to help students with their science projects.

Sumriddetchkajorn also used his grant to build optical education kits for a "Play with Photonics" programs in 14 rural Thai elementary schools and ran seminars for 129 teachers to show them how to teach optics more effectively.

The "Play with Photonics" kits include mirrors spherical lenses, laser pointers, prisms, solar cells, motors and other items appropriate for demonstrating optics at work to students in grades 4-6. After demonstrating the workings of the kits to 605 students, they were donated to the schools.

"The scholarship helps us to push our "Shining-Spectrum-to-Society (SSS)" project into the next level," he says. "Based on our achievements as well as suggestions from local school teachers and researchers, we are planning to hold a five-day science camp in 2009. In this camp, qualified grade 7-12 students will learn more about basic optics and their simple applications in everyday life."

Sumriddetchkajorn won the 2005 ICTP-ICO Prize for his past outreach activities. His success is a good illustration of how SPIE members can increase the photonics workforce of the future.

SPIE provides support to members for photonics related education and outreach projects that increase awareness about the field of optics and photonics.

Not-for-profit organizations such as universities, optics centers, science centers, primary and secondary schools, youth clubs, industry associations, and international optical societies are eligible for project support through an application process. Grants are awarded twice a year. The next deadline for SPIE Education and Outreach Grant [applications](#) is 15 January 2009.

The 2008 SPIE outreach award winners are:

- Center for Science Education and Training, National Institute for Laser, Plasma and Radiation Physics (Romania)
- Centro de Investigaciones en Óptica, A.C. (Mexico)
- Changchun Institute of Optics, Fine Mechanics & Physics (China)
- Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)
- EASTCONN/Three Rivers Community College (CT)
- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (India)
- International School of Photonics, Cochin University of Science and Technology (India)
- Koç University (Turkey)
- Lab for Laser Energetics (LLE) at the University of Rochester and the Rochester Section of OSA (USA)
- Lebanese American University (Lebanon)
- Macquarie University (Australia)
- Bauman Moscow State Technical University (Russia)
- National Capital Section of the Optical Society of America (USA)
- New Mexico Optics Industry Association (USA)
- New England Board of Higher Education (USA) (Described in the April 2008 issue of SPIE Professional)
- Oak Ridge High School Science Department (MI)
- Optics Institute of Southern California (USA)

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- Penn State Electro-Optics Center (USA)
- SPIE Student Chapter and National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (Thailand)
- Spring Independent School District (USA)
- Texas State Technical College, Waco (USA)
- University of Arizona (USA) (Two awards to Carl Maes and Charles Falco)
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