

MAKING LEARNING FUN



Tyraine "Grand Hank" Ragsdale with chart that scores the United States behind many other countries in math and science and shows the need for enhanced teaching in these areas. — PHOTOS BY ABDUL R. SULAYMAN/TRIBUNE CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER

Grand Hank puts spin on science class

Robert Hightower
Tribune Staff Writer

Science is Tyraine Ragsdale's life. Of course, he has other interests, but science is something that he not only loves, but also wants to share with the youth.

From this desire he has created Grand Hank Productions to increase the interest of and enrollment of students into the educational process.

As part of the production, Ragsdale, who goes by the moniker Grand Hank, teaches science in an unorthodox yet effective method.

To Ragsdale, science is something that is lacking in the American educational system.

"The United States used to be the world power in science and now we are mediocre at best," he said.

In fact, in last year's Programme for International Student Assessment, a triennial worldwide test of 15-year-old schoolchildren's scholastic perform-

ance, the United States finished in an unflattering 29th place out of 45.

Ragsdale said that this trend must end.

"We are in a position where there has to be some push to restoring the United States as the No. 1 leader of science in the world," Ragsdale said.

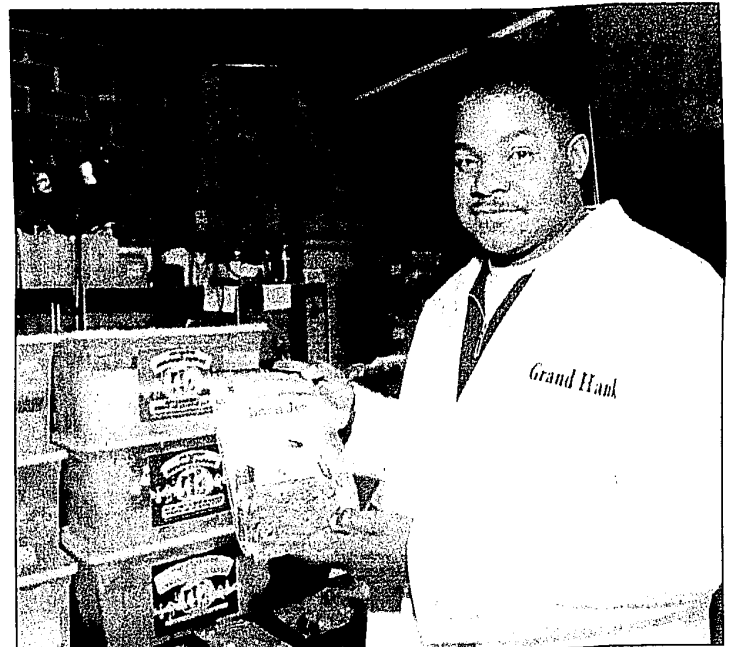
In his effort to aid in the turn around, Ragsdale is gearing up to begin the Second Annual Black History Month Field Trip.

The event, which runs from Feb. 2 to 27, is scheduled to feature live demonstrations predicated on African-American scientists. The lessons are aligned with the School District of Philadelphia's Science Core Curriculum for grades four through eight.

The field trips take student to Ragsdale's studio at 7153 Sprague St.

Ragsdale said a practical approach to science is what he found to garner the best results.

"You have to hit all the senses. We have developed a multi-sensory



Ragsdale shows science experiment kits that may be used at home or school to re-enforce scientific principles.



Ragsdale and the School District of Philadelphia will host the **Second Annual Black History Monty Science Field Trips**, from Feb. 2 to Feb. 27, 2009. — **ABDUL R. SULAYMAN/TRIBUNE CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER**

Grand Hank

From Page 1B

approach," he said. "We want to make it so that you can actually smell the aroma of what science is all about."

Ragsdale went on to say that he's seen the results of using this method of instruction.

"Touching on those senses puts us in a position so that we can get kids who are not traditionally interested and say if I see him doing it I might take an interest in it," he said. "One of the ways to engage kids is through show

and tell."

The demonstrations use a mixture of pop culture to educate.

"We incorporated rap music, PowerPoint and story telling. We want every student to leave here 10 times more enlightened than when they got here," he said.

After the field trip, Ragsdale said he wanted the lessons to stay with the students.

"We have decided that one of the key things that I don't see is that when we do events, there must be a follow-up," Ragsdale said.

The students can continue to learn science thanks to home

products available from Grand Hank Productions. The students can conduct their own experiments, such as how to make soft and hard water using the products.

"The science that we do is not in position so that kids can blow things up or destroy anything but so that they can get the basic concept of various topics that are around the environment, chemistry, biology and physical science," he said. "We want to move your son or daughter to a new way of looking at science."

For information visit online www.grandhank.com.

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