



Connecticut
United for
Research
Excellence, Inc.

NEWS & INFORMATION

Winter 1995



Sponsored by ResearchAmerica and CURE, Grand Hank, a.k.a. Tyraine Ragsdale, rapped about science at Sacred Heart University for nearly 700 Bridgeport middle school students. Press coverage was excellent.

When Grand Hank Raps About Science, Kids Listen and Learn

Sequins are not normal additions to a white lab coat, but when Tyraine Ragsdale leaves his research laboratory and puts on his dazzling coat, he is transformed into Grand Hank -- a rapping, dancing performer who gets students excited about science.

"The force that drives students away from science is that they don't think scientists are normal people," explained Ragsdale, who is a researcher at R.W. Johnson Pharmaceutical Research Institute in Spring House, Penn., a division of Johnson & Johnson. "But when they see me, they say 'Hey, this guy is cool. Maybe I can give science a try.'"

(continued on pg. 2)



Emily Chakwin, a 5th grade student in Norwalk, joined Grand Hank on stage to perform a rap she had written about the quality of CURE's middle school publication, *BioRAP*.

Grand Hank (continued)

Ragsdale began rapping about five years ago after graduating from the University of Pittsburgh with a degree in chemistry. Looking for a way to get kids to appreciate science, he hit on the idea of using rap. "Rap music is what all students love, and I thought, why not use this as a tool to promote education?"

At Sacred Heart University, the students definitely got the message, clapping and swaying along with Grand Hank. One student wrote to Tyraine after the performance, "At first I was thinking of not going to college but when I heard your message I changed my mind. From your message I know that college can give me a lot of things. I also learned that scientists are just like regular people. I learned that anybody can be a scientist. It takes an education to get to college."