

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Ephrata High School Senior Grows Notable Crystal

Ephrata High School Senior Arianna VanderWal recently competed in the United States Crystal Growing Competition and placed fourth in the nation after growing a 9.34 g Alum (salt) crystal.

Arianna initially decided on the crystal-growing concept for a school science fair project. She attempted to grow crystals in three different temperate environments for one month and found only one – room temperature – to be successful. “It was interesting how high-maintenance the process became due to the rapid crystal growth. I would check on things every-other day, even coming into EHS on Wednesdays, to monitor the progress,” she said.



As the crystal continued to grow and take shape, Ephrata High School chemistry teacher Chris Ann Slye encouraged Arianna to also consider entering the United States Crystal Growing Competition. The national competition awards crystals with excellent morphology, size, and clarity. Arianna agreed to enter, completed the online application, and mailed the crystal to the University of Buffalo. Knowing there would be hundreds of other crystals entered into the competition, Arianna admitted to not having any real expectations but feeling confident about what she produced in just 30 days. She also felt reassured by Mrs. Slye’s guidance. “We developed a great student-teacher relationship. She really went above and beyond to help me.”



When the competition results were released, Arianna learned she placed fourth in the country. Cash awards were given to the top three crystal growers, but Arianna is satisfied with placing fourth, “I thought to myself, ‘Wow, this is crazy! I was just doing this for the science fair.’ ”

As the end of Arianna’s senior year is fast approaching, she looks forward to pursuing her love of science in nursing school with aspirations of becoming a pediatric nurse.

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