I want to welcome you to the first Outreach Committee Newsletter. This is a new way that we are working to connect with people in the Crow Institute and with the rest of the campus community.

Let me introduce myself. I am a 5th year graduate student in the Geoscience department and have always felt that outreach was an important part of the process of science. I have worked with the Crow Institute for most of my time here and have been committee chair for the last year. I believe that joining together all the aspects of evolution from around campus really makes the Crow Institute an integral part of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

We’re moving into a new era of scientific thinking and practices that involve a lot more public involvement with many aspects of the scientific community. As an outreach committee, we’re at the forefront of these efforts and are moving forward to embrace these ideals across the campus and around the world. Because of this, and because we want to reach out to as many people as we can through our activities, we are renewing our efforts to get people involved. The more scientists that are involved in our outreach efforts, the more of the general public we are able to touch.

I am very excited to lead the way into a new age of outreach for the Crow Institute. I hope to see you in the future at one of our events!

Deb Rook, Chair
On September 27 and 28, the Crow Institute had two tables for “Exploration Stations” and an hour and a half hour teacher workshop for the Wisconsin Science Festival. The Crow Institute has been involved since the start of the festival three years ago.

Friday Booth

Friday consisted of mostly school groups and tons of kids. The Currie Lab brought an activity about ants and fungus farming and we had the “Skittle Hunt” natural selection activity. Our booths, with M&Ms and Skittles respectively, were a huge hit and completely swamped for the majority of the 5 hours we had the booth open. The Currie Lab (led by Gina Lewin and Heidi Horn) were diligent and our other volunteers (Chloe, George, Katie, and Martin) flew through natural selection with upwards of a thousand children. Chloe recalls “Some students said, ‘This is the best game!’ and ‘This is so cool!’ while they ate their skittles at the end. There were also teachers who stood to the side while the students played, and commented on how they could find a way to play this in their classrooms (very cool).”

It was crazy, but a blast!

“There were rows of people lined up behind the students who were playing skittle-bugs, and the students were craning their necks to see what all the excitement was.”

~Chloe Drummond
Saturday Booth

Saturday was tamer, with mostly families showing up to learn about natural selection in two ways: the “Skittle Hunt” and “Darwin’s Finches”. Our volunteers (Ali, George, Mary, Mike, and Quinn) interacted with fewer children, but had a lot more time with each family to explain natural selection based on what you eat and what eats you.

“The parents were all excited about how things played out.”
~ Mike Johnson

Saturday Teacher Workshop

Our last effort of the festival was a teacher workshop with five middle and high school teachers, led by Kristin and Deb. We had a taste-test, discussed a video, and worked through an activity surrounding the persistence of lactase in parts of the human population. And at the end we ran through tree thinking with the teachers who were interested. It is always so exciting to see interested teachers wanting to learn more about evolution.

Did you know that only **ONE THIRD** of humans is lactase persistent?

That’s right, intolerance is the wild type, and milk drinkers are mutants!

Charles Darwin (1877)
The Crow Institute Outreach Committee has been around for many years, and here’s a taste of some of the activities we’ve been involved with:
- Darwin Day
- Science Expeditions
- School Science Nights
- Wednesday Night @ the Lab
- Grandparent’s University
- WSST Conference
- Teacher Workshops

Here are the next things we’re planning that you can be involved in:
- Making of the Booths– Fall 2013
- Darwin Day– Feb 7-8, 2014
- Science Nights– Spring 2014
- Science Expeditions– Apr 2014
- Summer Teacher Workshop 2014
- AP Science Institute– June 2014
- Grandparent’s University– July 2014

Want more information or want to get involved?
Please contact Deb Rook at drook@wisc.edu

Mission Statement
The Crow Institute Outreach Committee works to advance the understanding of evolution in the general public and K-12 students through outreach events, public lectures, school programs, and teacher education. We strive to expose the public to strictly scientific evolutionary concepts, removing any overtones. Along with evolution, we value the continued outreach work of all science.