



# Abbott & TCPID present

## SciFest @ TCPID 2025

### About Abbott

Abbott is a global healthcare company which has been operating in Ireland since 1946 to make a diverse range of healthcare products including diagnostics, diabetes care, medical devices and nutritional products. Over five weeks Abbott mentors work with TCPID students on a Scifest project on their joint area of interest.

### Projects

- **Ava McCahey - *Ava's Love for Golden Retrievers***
- **Alex (AI) Martin - *Marvellous Minds***
- **Rhys Merriman - *The Science & History of Animation***
- **Robert Walsh Garcia - *Shark Facts***
- **Conor Quinn - *The Biology of Owls***
- **Thomas Monk - *The Psychology of Video Gaming***
- **Alex Byrne - *Sails Force***
- **Orla Hunt - *The Science behind Irish Sign Language (ISL)***



# The History of SciFest @ TCPID

Abbott & TCPID have been working together for nine years on SciFest. Throughout the years many wonderful projects and working relationships have been created between Abbott mentors and TCPID students. This initiative allows students to better understand the working world, the biomedical industry and how it operates. Students can also develop many important skills including team work, communication, research and presentation skills among many others. It also gives Abbott mentors the opportunity to better understand TCPID, build connections with TCPID students and learn many new things.



SciFest 2017



SciFest 2018



SciFest 2019



SciFest 2022





SciFest 2023





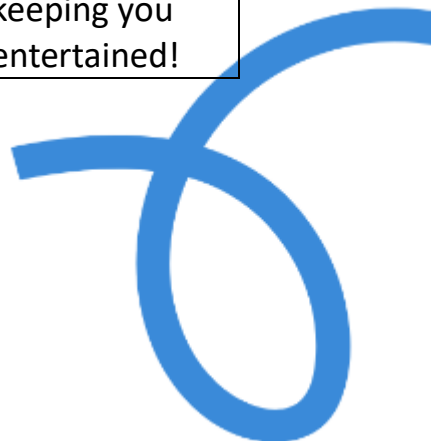
SciFest 2024

Title of Project	Shark Facts
Name of Student	<p data-bbox="948 353 1257 387">Robert Walsh Garcia</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	<p data-bbox="979 981 1225 1014">Paddy O'Rourke</p> 
What is the project about?	Types of sharks.
Why did you pick this topic?	<p data-bbox="823 1619 1385 1921">Robert: I have been fascinated about sharks since I was young. I also like the movie Jaws. I hope the project will make people learn more about sharks and understand how some sharks in the world aren't dangerous to humans.</p>



Title of Project	The Psychology of Gaming
Name of Student	<p>Thomas Monk</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	<p>Leanne Murphy</p> 
What is the project about?	Human interaction and behaviour with gaming.
Why did you pick this topic?	<p>Thomas: I am an avid gamer. Online games are great because you can play alone or with others and it helps to build skills like problem solving, decision making and social skills.</p>

Title of Project	Ava's Love for Golden Retrievers
Name of Student	<p>Ava McCahey</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	<p>Louise Brady</p> 
What is the project about?	Development of a golden retriever from birth to finding a new home.
Why did you pick this topic?	Ava: I've loved golden retriever puppies since I was a kid, they are great for keeping you company and they keep you entertained!



Title of Project

Marvellous Minds

Name of Student

Al Martin

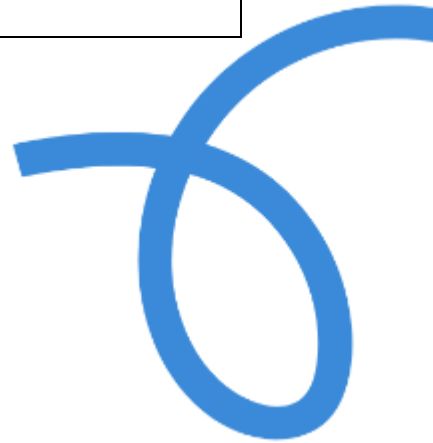




Who are your partners on this project?

Erica Dovgalyte & Kelly O'Sullivan




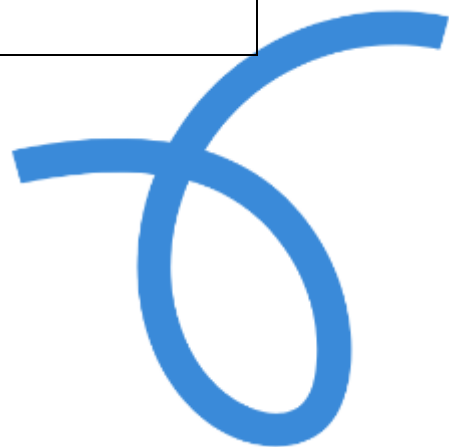
What is the project about?	How do the Marvel films influence people's imagination and behaviour.
Why did you pick this topic?	Al: I've grown up on Marvel movies and I thought it would be important to learn more about it.





Title of Project	The Biology of Owls
Name of Student	<p data-bbox="1002 398 1197 432">Conor Quinn</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	 <p data-bbox="963 1552 1232 1585">Roseleen Murphy</p>
What is the project about?	<p data-bbox="865 1641 1337 1727">Understanding Owls (and their superpowers).</p>
Why did you pick this topic?	<p data-bbox="813 1823 1385 1995">Conor: Owls are my favourite animals - I used to see them in the bird sanctuary as a kid. They're also very soft!</p>



Title of Project	The History & Science of Animation
Name of Student	<p>Rhys Merriman</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	Denise Hannigan
What is the project about?	Different animations like 2D, 3D and stop motion.
Why did you pick this topic?	Rhys: I been a fan of animation since my childhood.



Title of Project	The Science behind Irish Sign Language (ISL)
Name of Student	<p data-bbox="1023 383 1174 416">Orla Hunt</p> 
Who are your partners on this project?	<p data-bbox="1013 1061 1182 1095">AJ Shrahan</p> 
What is the project about?	Irish Sign Language (ISL) and how it can help people.
Why did you pick this topic?	<p data-bbox="812 1662 1386 1832">Orla: It is very important to understand how different people communicate, like the deaf or hard of hearing.</p>

**Title of Project**

Sails Force

**Name of Student**

Alex Byrne



**Who are your partners on this project?**

Ronan Mac Donell





& Kate Peters



What is the project about?

The project is about how sail boats work.

Why did you pick this topic?

Alex: I like sailing, I go sailing with my Dad. We sail on holidays and I really like boats.



## Interview with Rachelle Waters



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Citizenship & Sustainability Specialist – Abbott, Sligo*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*Working with TCPID is an incredibly rewarding and impactful part of my work. I thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to help the student develop new skills and improve on skills already in their pocket. Watching the students gain confidence throughout the mentoring weeks is one of the best parts! By supporting the students through the SciFest programme I get to help create a more inclusive and support environment that I can bring home to my friends and family.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*I've been working with SciFest / TCPID for 5 years now and coming back each year it just gets better and better. Meeting everyone and building friendships is my favourite part.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*Coming back each year I learn more and more. The students are always sharing new bits of knowledge with us. I have learned about their interests and skills and how I can be more supportive, adaptable to change and empathic. Most of all I have learned gratitude and perspective. Mentoring has put a fresh perspective on life for me and I've learned to appreciate the small wins.*

## Interview with AJ Shrahan



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Citizenship & Sustainability Specialist – Abbott, Galway*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*Honestly, it's the most meaningful thing I've ever been part of. It's hard to put into words just how special this programme is. The team behind TCPID is one of rarity.*

*They are those kind of people you meet once and you instantly feel a sense of warmth and connectivity, a friend for life. The students are incredible — they bring such a fresh perspective, so much resilience, and genuine joy to everything they do. I've had the privilege of partnering with a student on both years, working on a STEM-related project together. This year, Orla chose to explore Irish Sign Language, as Orla has a hearing impairment and signs and I've learned so much! I've even brought it home to teach my family, and my daughter proudly shared a few signs with her class!*

*This kind of partnership really matters. It reminds us that inclusion isn't just something we talk about — it's something we do. These students aren't just gaining experience — WE, the mentors are gaining insight, empathy, and a much deeper understanding of what it means to work in a truly inclusive way.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*This is my 2nd year working on SciFest and I can hands on heart say my favourite moment was this year and seeing Orla's eyes shine so bright when we spoke about Irish Sign Language and how we could use this project as an opportunity to educate others on ISL. I have learnt so much ISL from Orla and I was able to bring it home to my family and my daughter has now taught her entire 2nd class how to sign "Good Morning", "How are you",*



*"Thank you" & "Please".*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*This experience has taught me so much. It reminded me that we're all sewn in the same garden — what makes the difference is how much care and attention we give to help each other grow. Working alongside all of these amazing students through this partnership has been incredible. I've gained more than I could have ever imagined and it's an experience I will always carry throughout life and use the tools I've gained to educate & influence others.*



## Interview with Patrick O'Rourke



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Senior Operations Manager - Abbott, Longford*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*It is so important for us to work together so we can both learn and grow.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*I love to see all the students present back to their friends and family. To see the pride in all the parents' eyes.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I have learned that every day is a school day. We learn and grow continuously throughout our lives.*

## Interview with Roseleen Murphy



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Abbott Product Steward – Abbott, Dublin (Liffey Valley)*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*It is so important for us to work together so we can both learn and grow.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite Sci-Fest moment?**

*When the student presents their project to their families.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*So, so much... from Pucas to Puppies and everything in between.*





## Interview with Leanne Murphy



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Manager, Learning & Development – Abbott, Dublin (Liffey Valley)*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*I think it's important for Abbott and TCPID to work together as it is a mutually beneficial collaboration. This program provides a meaningful platform for students to be heard, grow, and contribute in ways that reflect their unique strengths. It also offers mentors a valuable opportunity to develop inclusive leadership skills that are vital to the success of our business.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*Mentoring my student has been a professionally enriching experience. It's strengthened my ability to work with diverse mindsets and highlighted the value of inclusive collaboration. Most importantly, it's been inspiring to see the student's voice and knowledge take centre stage. Empowering them to lead with their ideas I hope has boosted their confidence but also reminded me how much we can learn by listening to different perspectives.*



## Interview with Louise Brady



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Purchasing Team Lead – Abbott, Longford*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*It so important as it brings so many opportunities for learnings for both the students at TCPID and the mentors from Abbott. The learnings and joy, Abbott mentors get from working so closely, with such talented and enthusiastic students, is invaluable.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I've picked up so many cool facts about topics I never would've thought to look into before.*

## Interview with Denise Hannigan



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Manufacturing Manager, Abbott Longford*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*A great collaboration and mutual respect is evident between Abbott and TCPID for what everyone is contributing to this fantastic programme each day. For Abbott to be even a small part of each student's college journey is very rewarding, fulfilling and inspiring.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*Seeing the final finished presentations, students brimming with confidence and mentors brimming with pride. Amazing to see strong bonds built over such a short period of time.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*You can easily turn students' passions into science related projects and still gain lots of learnings for both students and mentors along the way.*



## Interview with Kelly O Sullivan



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Citizenship & Sustainability Specialist – Abbott, Sligo*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*These workshops help build confidence, develop skills for both students and mentors. The mentors learn a lot of new skills such as, listen actively, adapt their communication styles, and build trust with their mentees. This partnership not only benefits the individuals involved—it also strengthens Abbott's culture and enhances employee engagement. This collaboration is a powerful example of how a company like Abbott and educational institutions can work together to drive and build a more inclusive society.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*Last year working with Darragh was a joy - watching him grow in confidence and present his final project, beaming with pride as he presented his project especially to his family was a truly inspiring. But also all the students proudly showcased their projects, each one a reflection of their passions.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I've learned a lot through the various workshops and speaking engagements but the most outstanding was the recent TCPID Employment workshop, where Dualta said a very powerful sentence " It's not about the disability, it's about the ability*

## Interview with Ronan Mac Donnell



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Area Treasurer for Abbott Rapid Diagnostics – Abbott, Dublin (Liffey Valley)*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*I think that TCPID is a unique programme which is very important to give more people access to 3rd level education. I think we need more programmes like TCPID founded in universities across the island of Ireland. Abbott has been in Ireland since 1945 and has a large network of manufacturing sites, commercial sites and people spread across Ireland. Working together Abbott and TCPID can spread a very positive message to get more people into 3rd level education.*

- **If you have worked on SciFest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*The Showcase. There is an enormous amount of hard work that the students put in over two years which culminates in this showcase event. Every year the pride in the room is very evident. Students, Lecturers, Mentors and families all coming together in recognition and celebration of this significant commitment from the students.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I have learned how to meet people where they are. We are all different in how we approach our day and we have different ways of expressing ourselves both in terms of happiness and discomfort. So, I am learning to get off my stool and go towards people in the hope they move towards me also.*

## Interview with Kate Peters



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Citizenship and Sustainability Manager Ireland – Abbott, Tipperary*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*I think first of all we've developed such an amazing partnership with TCPID and this program allows us to make a difference, both to the mentors and the students' lives every year. I feel that people with intellectual disabilities face numerous challenges in our country and this program allows us to make a small difference to their lives. The program allows Abbott to be an ally and an advocate for change by educating those who get involved in the program.*

- **If you have worked on Sci-fest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*I feel so proud of all the students when I see them standing up with their projects, smiling from ear to ear and presenting to people they don't know all about the project that they've worked with Abbott on. I love meeting the students from years gone by and seeing the current students support each other on the day.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I've learned that we do make a small difference to the students' lives and that the gift of TCPID will remain with the mentors and the students forever.*

## Interview with Erika Dovgalyte



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Human Resources Generalist – Abbott, Dublin (Liffey Valley)*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*Because its important to keep up to date with science and keep connected with education whilst also being able to help students excel in their personal and professional journey.*

- **If you have worked on Scifest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*When students complete their projects and present them to everyone.*

- **What have you learned through working on SciFest?**

*I have learned to be even more resilient, understanding and it has helped me to always think outside of the box.*



## Interview with Marie Devitt



- **What is your role and where do you work?**

*Business Partnerships Manager - TCPID*

- **Why, for you, is it important that Abbott & TCPID work together?**

*The collaboration with Abbott and TCPID is a wonderful opportunity for our students to work with mentors from Abbott to develop science projects from an idea to a finished project after only 5 weeks. The students grow in confidence every week and develop their skills, by doing research, creating surveys, collaborating with new people and designing their project boards.*

*This is a unique opportunity for our TCPID students to gain an understanding of, and an appreciation for science with the support of a dedicated mentor from Abbott.*

- **If you have worked on SciFest before, what is your favourite SciFest moment?**

*This is my 8th year working with the team from Abbott. This will be our 7th year collaborating on the SciFest@TCPID programme as we had a gap due to the Covid pandemic.*

*I have so many favourite moments. One is from the first ever SciFest@TCPID exhibition in 2017 because it was so new to all of us. We didn't really know what we were doing but it was so much fun and we just knew that it would become a very, very special annual event.*

*Another wonderful memory was in 2022 when Minister Simon Harris attended the event and our students were interviewed for RTE News. I have loved every single minute over the past 8 years of working with our wonderful students and with the incredible team from Abbott. The fact that so many of the Abbott mentors volunteer to come back every year means so much to me. I have made some great friendships and it is without a doubt, the highlight of my year in work.*

- What have you learned through working on SciFest?

*I have learnt that our students have so many incredible skills and talents. I have been so inspired by the project content each year. I have learnt that there is no limit to what is possible when people are supported and encouraged.*

Thank you to all the amazing Abbott volunteers who worked as project partners with our students!

**Rachelle Waters**  
**Kate Peters**  
**AJ Shrahan**  
**Kelly O'Sullivan**  
**Ronan MacDonnell**  
**Paddy O'Rourke**  
**Roseleen Murphy**  
**Erika Dvorgalyte**  
**Louise Brady**  
**Leanne Murphy**  
**Denise Hannigan**







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