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Kaylee Remington/The Morning Journal

From left, Feyiz Pekel and Hasan Savas pose near student projects on Sept. 23 that made it all the way to a state competition, all thanks to the teachings and hard work of Pekel and Savas.

## Three teachers shine at Horizon Science Academy of Lorain

**Kaylee Remington**  
The Morning Journal

Three teachers from the Horizon Science Academy of Lorain have received Governor's Awards for their achievements in STEM education and student research in their classrooms.

Hasan Savas, Feyiz Pekel and Feyza Keles received the recognition by The Ohio Academy of Science. The Academy selected 45 schools and 460 teachers to receive Governor's Thomas Edison Awards for Excellence in STEM Education.

The awards are given to schools that stimulate student scientific research and technological design that goes beyond the traditional classroom activities.

Savas, who is the STEM coordinator for Horizon in Lorain, and a chemistry and physics teacher, said this is his first time receiving the award.

"I feel good, special," he said. "I feel like this is a special award."

Pekel teaches middle school subjects such as programming, Microsoft applications, and designing.

"I didn't think I would get any award, it's my job to help the students," he said. "I can give my time anytime, always and I can be here for you if you want to work."

Jayson Bendik, assistant director and community outreach coordinator for Horizon, said the students have been making great progress in science and engineering fairs and in

innovation programs.

"We have implemented programs like Project Lead the Way, First Lego League, and First Tech Challenge into our curriculum, which provides students the opportunities to engage in hands-on activities, projects, and problems that are reflective of real-world challenges," Bendik said. "In the 2015 and 2016 CONSEF Science Fair, our school earned first and second place competing with over 500 projects and around 50 schools," he said. "Our Robotics team (Spartans) was one of nine teams that advanced to the State Championships where they received two prestigious awards: the Rockwell Collins Innovative Award and the Finalist Alliance

Captain Award."

And this doesn't happen without the guidance from the teachers.

Bendik said all three of the teachers have spent weekends and late nights at the school helping the students with different projects.

Pekel does mainly the robotics part in the school whereas Savas is in the classroom for the most part.

"The focus is to take them to as many opportunities as we can and expose them to the STEM related fields so that they can apply what they learned in class, into the projects and then take them into all of the different competitions," Bendik said.

Savas said his middle school students are putting together small-

scale science projects while the high school students are doing large-scale.

"We are also doing some innovation projects so last year we did two of them and one of them got a \$20,000 scholarship from Believe in Ohio, which is like a biology project," he said.

Pekel said his students have been constructing robots and they also have been working with 3-D printing.

"Last year we did robotics and we are doing the same this year," he said. "Last year was nice, but we had bad luck because each time we went to the competition, our robot has a technical difficulty, but we did good."

Even though there were technical difficulties, that doesn't

stop Pekel from continually working with the students.

Keles was not in town at the time the article was written.

Horizon also had one student finish first in the Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair and qualify to attend two international science fairs.

The school also has had other first and second place finishes in district and state science fairs.

"What we do as educators is not for ourselves, we're very selfless," Bendik said. "So Mr. Savas, Mr. Pekel are those kind of people they aren't really in it for the award, but at the same times it's nice to receive any kind of recognition."