

# BGE Surprises Krieger Schechter with Contest Grand Prize

By Daniel Nozick

**“Do not, do not, do not touch”** — this catchy refrain from BGE’s Wires Down Video Challenge not only helps to educate about electrical safety, but describes the untouchable nature of Krieger Schechter Day School students, who were informed on Jan. 18 that they had won the contest’s grand prize for the second year in a row.

The contest was started five years ago in collaboration with local elementary schools. As a part of their outreach programs for energy education and electrical safety, the contest provides an opportunity for BGE to introduce these concepts in the classroom and provide students with an opportunity to win money for their school.

“This is the first time that we have had a repeat winner,” said Stephen J. Woerner, president and COO of BGE. “They did such an outstanding job this year that they deserve to be recognized. I would encourage all of the schools to continue to innovate their approach for this contest. The kids are definitely getting things out of it, because the questions that we get, they are informed questions based on the ideas that we are trying to get across to them.”

As a part of the prize for winning, the Krieger Schechter students’ commercial was aired on all four major local television networks this past weekend.

“I’m so glad that the fourth graders were able to see that



hard work really pays off. They put so much work and effort into this and to be rewarded the way that we were really shows them that in the future, they can be a success,” said Alex Thaler, the science teacher for kindergarten to fourth grade at Krieger Schechter.

Thaler has been participating in the contest with his students for the past three years and remarkably, has won every time, securing the \$1,000 prize for best in Baltimore County in the school’s first year partic-

ipating and the \$10,000 grand prize this year and last. While last year’s prize was put towards building two playgrounds and an amphitheater for the school, this year, Krieger Schechter plans to share some of their winnings.

Rabbi Moshe Schwartz, head of school at Krieger Schechter, explained that 10 percent of the prize would be put towards partnerships with local elementary schools. For the next two years, this money will help to fund a reading buddies program

that brings sixth- and seventh-grade students from Krieger Schechter to read to prekindergarten, kindergarten and first-grade students at John Eager Howard Elementary School.

Additionally, the school has partnered with Milbrook Elementary School and Art with a Heart under the auspices of Baltimore County Police Department’s community affairs division to bring students together to learn about living in the same community, shared values and building and designing things through art. In April, a mosaic will be dedicated at the Pikesville precinct by the two schools, while a smaller mosaic is installed at each school to commemorate the partnership.

Group photo: BGE; Other photos: Krieger Schechter



"Giving back is reflective of the values of our school and our mission," said Schwartz. "We have worked hard to create these partnerships and it is only fitting that others share in our good fortune as well, because that is what good neighbors do and is a strong educational message for our students as well."

The remainder of this year's prize money will be put towards further improving Krieger Schechter's science program with new tools and technology such as specialized STEM inquiry kits with hands-on experiments with weather, electricity, rocks and minerals, sound and chemistry according to Schwartz and the team at BGE.

"[Winning the grand prize again] truly is a testament to



BGE president and COO Stephen Woerner recognizes Krieger Schechter's Rabbi Moshe Schwartz (left) and Alex Thaler (right).

the level of education that we provide. It is about the partnership between teachers and students, utilizing science to create this video that actually tells a story to convey the message, as opposed to just singing a song on a video," said Janine Frier, board chair for the school.

The students enjoyed the contest as well, and erupted into celebration in their seats upon being told that they had

won the grand prize. Thaler said that in the weeks leading up to this reveal, he would have fourth graders asking if he heard anything every day.

"It was a great time and it was educational and it was fun. We only have 45-minute science sections so we would film one part, then leave and do more the next class," said Jacob Thierman, a fourth-grade student in Thaler's class. He explained that because of the

inconsistent schedule, students were uncertain how the video would all be pieced together by Thaler. "We didn't know what to expect, we love the effects."

While Thaler said that students knew they won as soon as they saw the BGE officials, the students are even smarter than he knows.

"We already knew we were going to win," explained fourth grader Jonah Intner. "Last year, they did the same thing where they told us there was going to be an assembly and it turned out to be this thing. When they said we had a 'backpack assembly,' we knew this was it. The only thing that we didn't know is if we had won the grand prize."

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