



SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE: Christine Coppage, 10, of 11 Harrison St., stands by her project that placed first at St. Mary's School Science Fair. Christine's cabbage patch doll, Roxanne, is attached to the machine to demonstrate how dialysis works. (Mike Gay Photo)

Girl builds imitation dialysis machine with dad's help and captures top prize

By KAREN CUBIE
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Christine Coppage, 10, a St. Mary's School fifth-grader, could not have built her Science Fair project entitled "A Second Chance at Life" without her father's help. The project won the school's Science Fair Thursday night.

Christine built an imitation dialysis machine, a copy of the one her father, Robert Coppage, uses when he visits the Brockton Dialysis Center where he is a patient.

"I thought it would be interesting to find out what he goes through on dialysis," she explained. "I've worked on it since the beginning of the school year."

Coppage, a local laundromat owner, has been a dialysis patient for one year.

After several visits to the dialysis center during her father's appointments, Christine built her cardboard machine from a sample using

After studying the process, Christine is impressed by her father's tolerance for the dialysis.

"It's painful for some people to have needles," she said. "There was a 16-year-old girl (at the center) when I was there, who couldn't stand it.

"After a while, though, it's not so painful. You get used to it," she added.

Christine was surprised when she won Thursday's Science Fair.

"I was the last one to get called," she said.

She received 200 points, the highest tally possible, for her presentation.

Her father helped her set up her presentation yesterday, but he wasn't able to be at the school when the winners were announced.

"He had dialysis last night," she said, "but he was happy when he heard I won."

Her father won't be free from the dialysis machine until he receives a compatible kidney from a donor.