



**CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2010 PROJECT SUMMARY**

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| Name(s) Max Lan | Project Number S0316 |
| Project Title Altruistic Mindsets and Their Effects on Prosocial Behavior | |
| Abstract Objectives/Goals Social psychology is a major science applicable to almost every city on the planet, a subject of intense research over the past few decades. Prosocial, or helping, behavior, although commonplace, remains a mystery: what factors influence helping? My experiment measures the impact of a helpful mindset on prosocial behavior. Methods/Materials Participants were asked to watch a series of 3 videos. One group watched videos unrelated to helping; the other viewed two unrelated videos and a clip on helping others. The helping video was selected to instill a more altruistic mindset in the subject. My hypothesis was that volunteers who had watched the helping video would be more likely to aid someone else. After each participant watched the videos, an associate dropped books near him, whether the volunteer helped the associate or not determined the effect of the videos. Results The results showed that people who watched the helping video helped 30% more of the time than people who did not; however the probability of this as a random occurrence was 15%. Conclusions/Discussion A more definitive conclusion could be reached with more subjects. However, the results are promising, indicating the possibility that helping behavior can be induced in people, or that behavior is highly related to the general mindset at the time. | |
| Summary Statement My project reveals the correlation between a helping mindset and actual prosocial behavior. | |
| Help Received Dr. Schafer helped with general project requirements, Dr. Jensen helped with formulating actual experiment (both at the Harker School) | |