

## Spotlight on Volunteers

### Bob Togasaki



**Bob Togasaki** is passionate about teaching science. Now professor emeritus of biology at **Indiana University**, he continues to share his enthusiasm about science through WonderLab.

In 1997, Bob designed his first science activity for WonderLab's outreach program. He asked the public to guess which pure fruit drinks and popular juices were the "healthiest" for them. He then gave people pH paper to dip into the different juices to measure their acidity, and thus the amount of vitamin C.

People were more than a little surprised by their discoveries!

Since the interim museum opened, Bob has developed numerous creative activities to help visitors explore the museum's monthly program themes. He also has regularly offered special programs on a variety of scientific topics, both in his field of specialty and in other areas that interest him.

"As a professor, I was a specialist. But I believe it is important for me and my colleagues to share general concepts of scientific knowledge with the public," Bob said. "WonderLab offers me the opportunity to do that and also to stay in touch with young people."

Bob was born in San Francisco, California, but his family moved to Japan when he was a baby in the 1930s. It was there, "in fourth or fifth grade," that he was inspired by a teacher to study science even though he was better at other subjects. As Bob describes it, this maverick man, "at great risk to himself," threw out the authorized science curriculum and made up hands-on science lessons using a nearby field as the students' "research laboratory." Bob considers his career and his volunteer work

with WonderLab a way to honor and carry on the work of this superb teacher.

We at WonderLab think Bob is an exceptional teacher, too. "You can't help but get excited about a subject when Bob presents it because his teaching methods are so creative," said **Sonya Wolen**, programs director. "He takes a complex scientific concept and makes it easily accessible to everyone. Not only that, but he makes it fun!"

In addition to his work for WonderLab, Bob helps run Indiana University's **Jim Holland Summer Enrichment Program in Biology** for eighth and ninth grade students. The purpose of this program is to increase the number of minority students who major in biology and choose careers in biology and related fields. He also is involved in establishing a Bloomington branch of the Biology Department of **Ehime Women's College**.

Bob talks of his obligation to nurture the next generation in same the way that teachers and others helped him when he was a boy. We are very grateful, Bob, that you chose WonderLab as the means to that end.