8th Annual Desert Data Jam

This school year, 615 middle school students participated in Asombro’s 8th annual Desert Data Jam. We challenged students to ask questions and carefully analyze datasets on drought, dust emissions, litter decomposition, and mammal habitat use collected by scientists in our region. Then they developed creative projects (e.g., videos, drawings, rap songs) that tell the story of the data in an interesting way.

Left: First place award winners Christopher Walker and Keyon Kamali.
Right: Third place winners Sarah Fong and Hannah Greenwood. Photos by Gene Gant.

2019 TOP AWARD-WINNING PROJECTS

1st place - Divine Decomposition Data by Keyon Kamali and Christopher Walker (J. Paul Taylor Academy). Creative project: Video newscast about decomposition rates in three locations

2nd place - Drought Doesn’t Have Clout by Vivianna Rauch and Jocelyn Lopez (Mesa Middle School). Creative project: Infographic with suns and cotton ball clouds showing the percent of state in drought across years and states

3rd place - Rabbits and Their Photoactivity Habits by Hannah Gatewood and Sarah Fong (Sierra Middle School). Creative project: “Zen garden” with photo cut-outs showing mammal detections in desert grasslands and shrublands

Left: Seventeen projects earned honorable mentions, including “Say Cheese” by Jered Stremel, Dante Moralez, and Enrique Beniquez-Cross (not pictured) for their creative project featuring hand carved animals. Photo by Stephanie Bestelmeyer.

Left: Asombro staff members Rachel, Ryan, and Dakota help check projects in before the competition begins. Photo by Brad Cooper.

Seventy-nine volunteer judges evaluated the Desert Data Jam projects. Photo by Brad Cooper.
Deming Teacher Workshop

Science teachers from Deming Intermediate School and Red Mountain Middle School spent their first day back from spring break working with Asombro staff to improve science education with the newly adopted Next Generation Science Standards. Teachers attended a workshop hosted by Asombro to learn how to apply the new science standards across 6th-8th grades. PNM Resources Foundation provided funding to support the workshop through a grant to Asombro.

Participating teachers all reported significant gains in their knowledge and confidence using the standards following the workshop. They will continue to work with Asombro staff this spring through NGSS-aligned lessons Asombro will bring into their 6th-8th grade science classes.

On March 18, 6th-8th grade teachers in Deming participated in a workshop on the new science standards with Asombro.

New Mexico Climate Champions Continues in Summer 2019

Asombro’s popular science education and action program, New Mexico Climate Champions, is back after a successful debut in 2017. Thanks to a generous grant from Dr. Lynn and Carolyn Melton, a new group of 5th-8th grade students will get to participate in this innovative program focused on climate change issues in New Mexico.

Ten teachers will join Asombro for a two-day workshop in July. They’ll learn how to implement two education modules and leave the workshop with a kit of materials they can use in their classrooms next school year.

Education Programs

Thanks to your support, Asombro staff provided 381 hours of science for 8,520 students so far in 2019. Here are the programs in February and March 2019.

1-Feb E. Picacho Elem - Desert Stories
2-Feb STEM Day for Girls - Wildlife Biology
2-Feb Scientist Saturday
4-Feb Sunrise Elem (GIDS) - Properties of Matter
4-Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam
5 & 7 Feb Monte Vista Elem - Science Interns
5-Feb Vista MS - Insulating You/Insulating Earth
7-Feb Sunrise Elem - Life Cycles
7-Feb Zia MS - Data Jam
8-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam
8 & 11 Feb Riverside (GIDS) - Science Interns
11-12 Feb Vista MS - Decomposition
11-Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam
12 & 15 Feb Monte Vista Elem - Sci. Interns
13-Feb Columbia Elem - field trip
13-Feb Desert Hills Elem - Science Night
14-Feb Zia MS - Data Jam
15-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam
15-Feb Sierra MS - Veg. Measurements
19-Feb Red Mountain MS (Deming) - Energy Transfers
19-20 Feb Riverside (GIDS) - Sci. Interns
20-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam
20-Feb LC Catholic - Insulating You/Insulating Earth & Human Impacts
21-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Desert Stories
21 & 25 Feb Mesilla Park Elem - Sci. Interns
22-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam
22-Feb Columbia Elem - field trip
22-Feb Highland Elem - Science Night
25-26 Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam
25-Feb Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
26-Feb Lynn MS - Data Jam
26-Feb Las Cruces Host Lions Club
26 & 28 Feb Mesilla Park Elem - Science Interns
27-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam
27-Feb LC Catholic - Desert Stories
28-Feb Mesa & Vista MS - Data Jam
2-Mar Scientist Saturday
4-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam
4-7 Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns
5-Mar Sierra & Lynn MS - Data Jam
5-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
7-Mar Mesa & Vista MS - Data Jam
7-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Desert Stories
8 & 11 Mar Columbia Elem - field trip
9-Mar AAUW - Girls Can!
11-14 Mar Monte Vista Elem - Science Interns
11-Mar Tombaugh Elem - Life Cycles
11-Mar Tombaugh Elem - Life Cycles
12-Mar Columbia Elem - Patterns of Survival
13-Mar Zia MS - Data Jam
13-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam
13-Mar Valley View Elem - Science Night
14-Mar Vista MS - Science Night
15-Mar University Hills Elem - Structure and Function of Plants
15-Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns
15-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories
18-21 Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns
18-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - White Sands Lizards
18-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories
18-Mar Deming Public Schools - Teacher Workshop
19-Mar Sierra & Lynn MS - Data Jam
19-Mar Tombaugh Elem - Life Cycles
19-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
20-Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Night
20-Mar LC Catholic - Desert Stories & Plant a Seed
20-Mar Mesa MS - Data Jam
20-Mar Sierra & Lynn & Vista MS - Data Jam
21-Mar Deming Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
21-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
22-Mar Rio Grande Elem (Hatch) - Career Day
22-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories
25-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Life Cycles & Properties of Matter
26-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Structure and Function of Plants
27-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Schoolyard Diversity
28-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Sun & Shade in the Schoolyard
29-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Young Arthropod ID
Wonder Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service: 
Michele Marias

By Stephanie Haan-Amato

We are excited to recognize Michele Marias for her outstanding volunteer work with us at Asombro! Michele is our Wonder Award recipient and Volunteer of the Quarter.

Michele has been volunteering with us for a little over a year, but we already can’t imagine Asombro without her. She volunteers several hours each month to help with classroom programs, field trips, and behind-the-scenes preparation of materials at our Volunteer Gatherings.

She is a former middle school math and special education teacher. When we met her at the 2018 Las Cruces Volunteer Fair, we knew she would be an amazing addition and hoped she would join us. Luckily, she did!

Michele has many characteristics that make her an excellent volunteer. She’s flexible, thoughtful, and takes initiative to jump in and help wherever she’s needed. She is also especially skilled at identifying students who need extra help and providing it. Plus, she is just very kind and a joy to be around. In short, we think she is WONDER-ful!

We Need YOU: Volunteer to Make a Difference

Asombro is seeking volunteers for our classroom lessons, field trips, and public programs! There is no minimum time contribution. Help when you can. Please call 575-524-3334 or email information@asombro.org for more information.

Thank You!

We are grateful to the generous donors in the first quarter of 2019.

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(monthly donors)
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Nothing “Trivial” about Supporting Science Education

On March 19 and April 7, more than 40 people participated in trivia night competitions at Spotted Dog and Bosque Brewery’s Public House in support of the Asombro Institute for Science Education. In addition to showing off their knowledge of facts in a fun competition, participants got to feel good knowing that their contributions go to support Asombro’s science education programs. Many thanks to all who participated!

Online Publication Teaches Students Worldwide

Students around the world are learning about hydrologists and water issues in the southwest through the new article “Learning to Live with Less Water” which features Dr. Emile Elias, Asombro, and the Southwest Climate Hub. The article and associated activity page were published earlier this spring by Futurum, a magazine and online platform aimed at inspiring young people to follow a career in the sciences, research and technology. Read the full publication here: https://futurumcareers.com/learning-to-live-with-less-water
Visit the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park on the first Saturday of each month to take part in **Scientist Saturday**. From 8 AM - noon, Science Education Specialist Dakota Domínguez welcomes visitors, provides light refreshments, and organizes many educational displays and activities.

Upcoming Dates: **May 4**, **June 1**, and **July 6**