

Asombro Insights

Science education for eager minds

A Quarterly Newsletter

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A Fond Farewell to a Wonderful Year and 2013 Highlights

By Stephanie Bestelmeyer

It's hard to believe, but 2013 has come and gone. Before we launch into the exciting plans we have for Asombro in 2014 (and believe me, we have a lot of exciting plans!), we wanted to pause to reflect on some of Asombro's most memorable moments of 2013. I asked staff members to share their highlights.

Rink Somerday - The Science Intern Program was amazing. Many of the students were in our Experience Science Program two years ago as 3rd graders. Now that they are older, more knowledgeable students, we brought science to them in a new way. By learning the science content and then presenting that knowledge as lessons to younger students, 5th graders practiced leadership, presentation skills, and responsibility.

Paul Harper - I had a thoroughly great time working with 7th graders this year on a three-prong education attack that included two visits to their classrooms and a field trip to the Nature Park as part of our Research Experience Field Trip program. Students got to do hands-on science and then interpret data using the EcoTrends

website. It is amazing to see students interpreting and explaining scientific data to their peers!

Stephanie Haan-Amato - In spring 2013, we empowered 7th grade students at J. Paul Taylor Academy to propose and implement solutions to reduce the school's impact on the global climate. Students began a school recycling program, reduced energy use in the school, and established a no-idling zone in one of the school's drop-off and pick-up areas.

Anna Keener - I enjoyed helping students gather data at the Nature Park experiment plots. It was fun to see students' interest for the process grow when they learned it was their responsibility to contribute to our understanding of the desert. Another highlight was our July night hike with all the amazing arthropods and snakes as well as the solar system tour.



Asombro staff members. Clockwise from bottom: Anna Keener, Rink Somerday, Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Paul Harper, Donna Yargosz (volunteer), Stephanie Haan-Amato. Photo by Jeff Amato.

Thank you for supporting Asombro. Your contributions make these moments possible. Together, we are increasing science literacy and letting thousands of children experience the wonder of science!

Upcoming Events at the Nature Park

By Paul Harper

Spring is around the corner! That means warmer weather and fewer excuses about going outside. We have a great line-up of programs at the Nature Park. Put them on your calendar and come join us.



Fall in Love with the Desert

February 15th at 10:00

It's our take on a timeless tradition that does not include chocolate or flowers. Ok ... maybe there will be a bit of both, but the main purpose is to enjoy an easy, guided walk and fall back in love with the desert. Bring a friend to share your love of the desert. I promise it's contagious!

Plant It! Cactus Adoption and Native Plant Day

March 1st from 9:00 AM until Noon

Chihuahuan desert plants will be the highlight of this brand new event. Come learn how to transplant and care for native desert plants. Thanks to Justin Van Zee and



his work with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club, we have rescued cactus from an El Paso development site. You can adopt one or more of these plants (for a donation) to plant at the Nature Park or in your own yard. Learn from experts like Jack Carter, author of Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico and members of the Las Cruces Chapter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. Activity booths for kids will make sure that the whole family enjoys this new event.

Egg Trek

April 12th from 10:00 AM until Noon

Doesn't everybody love spring and the arrival of multicolored eggs? We thought we could bring a little science back into this time of year. Bunnies with eggs just don't do it for us. Head on over to the park to hunt for eggs, get some fabulous prizes, partake in some crafts and maybe you will learn something you never knew about the incredible egg. There is lots of fun and learning at this event, so come out and join us!



Education Programs

Thanks to your support, Asombro staff provided 910 hours of science programming for 19,371 students in 2013!

2-Oct	LC Catholic School - Science Interns/numbers & counting	7-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - Science Interns
3-Oct	Mayfield High School - field trip	7-Nov	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad
3-Oct	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad	8-Nov	Mesilla Park Elem. - Science Interns/field trip
4-Oct	Sonoma Elem. - field trip	12-Nov	Sunrise Elem. (GISD) - Science Interns
4-Oct	East Picacho Elem. - animal adaptations	13-Nov	LC Catholic School - plants
8-Oct	Monte Vista - Elem. - Science Interns	13-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - arthropod identification
9-Oct	LC Catholic School - Science Interns/See it Little & Big	13-Nov	Coronado High School (El Paso) - field trip
11-Oct	J Paul Taylor Academy - field trip	14-Nov	East Picacho Elem. - Science Interns
15-Oct	Monte Vista Elem. - Science Interns	14-Nov	Deming Cesar Chavez High School - field trip
16-Oct	LC Catholic School - animal adaptations/arthropod ID	14-Nov	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad
16-Oct	J Paul Taylor Academy - animal adaptations	15-Nov	Mesilla Park Elem. - Science Interns
17-Oct	Mayfield High School - field trip	15-Nov	Coronado HS (El Paso) - conceptual models
17-18 Oct	Lynn Middle School - mineral identification	18-19 Nov	Sunrise Elem. - Science Interns
17-Oct	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad	19-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - desert model
19-Oct	Carbon Research Teacher Workshop	20-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - field trip
21-Oct	Sierra Middle School - biodiversity sampling	21-Nov	East Picacho Elem. - Science Interns
22-Oct	Sunrise Elem. (GISD) - Science Interns/career day	21-Nov	Deming Cesar Chavez HS - Desert Data Jam
22-Oct	Mayfield High School - mineral identification	21-Nov	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad
23-Oct	University Hills Elem. - Science Interns	22-Nov	Lynn Middle School - carbon cycle
23-Oct	Water Festival - skulls	22-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - Biome Data Jam
24-Oct	Mayfield High School - Dust Data Jam	25-26 Nov	Sunrise Elem. - Science Interns
24-Oct	Lynn Middle School - Dust Data Jam	2-3 Dec	Sunrise Elem. - Science Interns
24-Oct	J Paul Taylor Academy - Science Interns	3-Dec	NMSU - alternative careers in biology
24-Oct	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad	4-Dec	LC Catholic School - weather
25-Oct	Sierra Middle School - field trip	4-Dec	J Paul Taylor Academy - weather
28-Oct	Mesilla Park Elem. - Science Interns	5-Dec	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad
29-Oct	Monte Vista Elem. - Science Interns	5-Dec	East Picacho Elem. - Science Interns
30-Oct	University Hills Elem. - Science Interns	6-Dec	University Hills Elem. - earth movers
30-Oct	Sierra Middle School - Biodiversity Data Jam	9-Dec	East Picacho Elem. - weather
31-Oct	Mayfield High School - Desert Data Jam	12-Dec	MacArthur Elem. - classification
31-Oct	Deming Cesar Chavez High School - earth and biomes	12-Dec	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad
4-Nov	East Picacho Elem. - plants	14-Dec	Light up the Desert - Holiday Luminarias
5-Nov	Sunrise Elem. (GISD) - Science Interns	16-Dec	Monte Vista Elem. - biomes
5-Nov	J Paul Taylor Academy - Science Interns	17-Dec	Lynn Middle School - carbon cycle
6-Nov	Tombaugh Elem. - animal adaptations	18-Dec	Camino Real Middle School - Wildlife CSI
6-Nov	University Hills Elem. - Science Interns	18-Dec	Lynn Middle School - carbon cycle
6-Nov	Coronado High School (El Paso) - ecosystems	19-Dec	Vista Middle School - Earth Squad

Dashing through the Desert: a Successful Asombro Fundraiser

By Stephanie Haan-Amato

One hundred seventy five people supported Asombro's education programs by dashing through the desert on November 9, 2013 in our inaugural Desert Dash Trail Race. Walkers and runners ranged in age from one to eighty-four, and they came from as far as the Netherlands! Fabulous volunteers made the event a success.

Participants chose to race in the 10K, 5K, or children's 1K events. Overall winners in the 5K and 10K received beautiful orchid pots, and first place age-group winners received potted succulents, all created and donated by local ceramic artist Sharbani Das Gupta. Second and third place winners in all age groups received a 12-oz bag of fresh-roasted coffee, generously donated by Picacho Coffee Roasters. Participants in the 1K Children's event received fun, science-themed prizes, such as fossil and rock collections donated by Donna Yargosz.

Please mark your calendars for Desert Dash 2014. It will be on **November 8**, and we hope that we can count on you to dash for Asombro!



Photos by Brad Cooper, Paul Harper, Marie McGrath, and Tabitha Rossman.

THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the generous donors in the last quarter of 2013.

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Spotted at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park!

Motion-sensitive wildlife cameras in remote parts of the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park are snapping photos of the wildlife not easily spotted by visitors.

We are posting some of these fantastic photos on the Asombro Facebook page in a weekly series called *Critter Cam!* Our Facebook friends can comment to identify and discuss the species shown in the photo. Please like our Facebook page to enjoy the great shots captured by our wildlife cameras!



Photo of a bobcat, which was taken by a remote wildlife camera at CDNP in November 2013.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Asombro-Institute-for-Science-Education/313063737697>

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