

Asombro Insights

Science education for eager minds

A Quarterly Newsletter

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Asombro Goes to Deming for Desert Stories

More than 400 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade students in Deming are experiencing the excitement of hands-on science this spring thanks to a grant from the PNM Foundation to the nonprofit Asombro Institute for Science Education. The grant covers the costs for Asombro educators to engage students from Columbus, Memorial, and Ruben Torres Elementary Schools in Asombro's Desert Stories Project.

Desert Stories includes three, one-hour class and schoolyard lessons. Asombro Executive Director Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer explains, "Each lesson combines science, math, and language arts activities to help students learn about a fascinating desert story: seed dispersal in 2nd grade, the yucca / yucca moth mutualism in 3rd grade, and plant / animal adaptations in 4th grade."



Third graders measure the length of a model yucca root.

Student and teacher feedback already shows the project is achieving its goal of exciting students about science and helping address the anticipated future shortage of a workforce trained to enter STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields. A 3rd grade teacher at Ruben Torres Elementary School wrote on a post-program evaluation form, "My students LOVED everything. I would love to do this again."



Fourth graders pump warm water through a jackrabbit ear to model how these animals cool themselves.

*"You came all the way from Las Cruces to teach us science? Wow."
- 3rd grader, Ruben Torres Elementary, Deming, NM*

1st Quarter 2018 Wonder Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service

Each quarter, Asombro staff members recognize an outstanding volunteer who inspires wonder in us. We're thrilled to announce that the recipient of the 1st quarter 2018 Wonder Award is **Donna Yargosz!**

Donna has been an incredibly giving Asombro volunteer since 2003. She serves as our Board Treasurer, assists with countless classroom programs and field trips every year, helps out at almost every event including Butterfly Flutterby, Desert Dash, and Luminarias, and does an incredible amount of behind-the-scenes preparation for education programs and events (from chopping bananas to stapling booklets).

She has reached more than 19,000 students directly in the past five years alone, and has indirectly helped bring fun science programs to countless others through her tireless and extremely generous support. We cannot thank Donna enough for all she does for Asombro. She is absolutely WONDER-ful!



Donna Yargosz, recipient of the 1st Quarter 2018 Asombro Wonder Award

Education Programs

Thanks to your support, Asombro staff provided 1,012 hours of science for 22,825 students in 2017!

Here are the programs from the fourth quarter of last year.

2-Oct White Sands MS - Carbon Cycle	30-Oct Camino Real MS - Data Jam	28-Nov Berino Elem - Desert Stories
2-Oct GS Daisy Troop - Career Day	30-Oct Highland Elem - Desert Stories	29-Nov Sierra MS - Wildlife CSI
3-Oct Camino Real MS - Data Jam	31-Oct Las Cruces HS - Energy Audit	29-Nov Sierra MS - Energy
3-Oct Fairacres Elem - Desert Stories	31-Oct Lynn MS- Energy	30-Nov Sierra MS - Wildlife CSI
4-Oct Tombaugh Elem - Desert Stories	2-Nov Las Cruces HS - Solar Energy	30-Nov Berino Elem - Desert Stories
5-Oct Virtual Learning Acad - Carbon Cycle	2-Nov White Sands MS - Wildlife CSI	1-Dec Sierra MS - Wildlife CSI
5-Oct Tombaugh Elem - Desert Stories	2-Nov White Sands MS - Energy	1-Dec Berino Elem - Desert Stories
10-Oct Camino Real MS - Data Jam	3-Nov NM MESA - Field Trip	4-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
10-Oct LC Catholic - Field Trip	6-Nov Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Energy	4-Dec Mesilla Park Elem - Science Interns
11-Oct J Paul Taylor Acad - Animal Adaptations	6-Nov Camino Real MS - Data Jam	4-Dec Lynn MS- Wildlife CSI
11-Oct LC Catholic - Animal Adaptations	6-Nov Highland Elem - Desert Stories	5-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
11-Oct LC Catholic - See It Little/See It Big	7-Nov Zia MS - Wildlife CSI	5-Dec Mesilla Park Elem - Science Interns
13-Oct NM Alliance for Minority Participation - Solar Energy	7-Nov Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Energy	5-Dec Lynn MS- Wildlife CSI
13-Oct NMSU Alamogordo Campus - Rainout Shelters	8-Nov J Paul Taylor Acad - Life Cycles	6-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
16-Oct Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Carbon Cycle	8-Nov LC Catholic - Life Cycles	6-Dec Mesa MS- Energy
16-Oct Gadsden Elem - Desert Stories	8-Nov LC Catholic - Classification	7-Dec Sonoma Elem - Rock It
17-Oct Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Carbon Cycle	9-Nov Las Cruces HS - Action Projects	7-Dec Virtual Learning Acad - Wildlife CSI
17-Oct Gadsden Elem - Desert Stories	9-Nov Camino Real MS - Wildlife CSI	7-Dec Mesa MS - Energy
18-Oct LC Catholic - Biodiversity	13-Nov Camino Real MS - Wildlife CSI	8-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
18-Oct Fairacres Elem - Desert Stories	13-Nov Lynn MS- Energy	8-Dec Mesilla Park Elem - Science Interns
18-Oct LC Catholic - Habitat Stats	13-Nov Highland Elem - Desert Stories	8-Dec Luminarias
19-Oct Las Cruces HS - Insulating You/ Insulating Earth	14-Nov Las Cruces HS - Action Projects	11-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
19-Oct Gadsden Elem - Desert Stories	14-Nov Vista MS - Wildlife CSI	11-Dec Mesilla Park Elem- Science Interns
20-Oct Highland Elem - Desert Stories	14-Nov Camino Real MS - Data Jam	11-Dec Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Wildlife CSI
23-Oct Vista MS- Energy	15-Nov Vista MS- Wildlife CSI	12-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
23-Oct Highland Elem - Desert Stories	15-Nov LC Catholic - Energy	12-Dec Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Wildlife CSI
24-Oct Mesa MS- Wildlife CSI	15-Nov LC Catholic - Insulating You/Insulating Earth	13-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
24-Oct Vista MS - Energy	15-Nov LC Catholic - Mineral Identification	13-Dec J Paul Taylor Acad - Arthropod Identification
25-Oct Mesa MS- Wildlife CSI	16-Nov Las Cruces HS - Action Projects	13-Dec LC Catholic - Desert Plants
25-Oct Fairacres Elem - Desert Stories	16-Nov Picacho MS - Wildlife CSI	14-Dec Picacho MS - Energy
26-Oct Las Cruces HS - Energy Resources	16-Nov Little Playmates - Animal Adaptations	15-Dec Sunrise Elem - Science Interns
26-Oct Zia MS - Energy	17-Nov Picacho MS - Wildlife CSI	15-Dec Picacho MS - Energy
27-Oct Zia MS - Energy	27-Nov NMSU - Insulating You/ Insulating Earth	18-Dec Camino Real MS - Energy
27-Oct Highland Elem - Desert Stories	27-Nov J Paul Taylor Acad- White Sands Lizard	18-Dec Little Playmates - Numbers & Counting
28-Oct NMSTA - Teacher Workshop	28-Nov Sierra MS - Energy	19-Dec Camino Real MS - Energy
		19-Dec Alameda Elem - Field Trip



Many students presented their action projects during two poster sessions during the day.

More Than 100 Students Attend New Mexico Climate Champions Summit

On Monday January 15, 2018, the Asombro Institute for Science Education hosted more than 100 middle and high school students from Las Cruces, Albuquerque, Santa Rosa, and Silver City at the New Mexico Climate Champions Summit. Students shared ways they are taking action against climate change in their schools and communities. They also heard from experts in climatology, water conservation, solar energy, and science communication. Student projects included installing solar-powered charging stations, replacing Styrofoam lunch containers with reusable serving trays for an entire school, taking pledges from community members to conserve water, and many more.

The New Mexico Climate Champions project is an action-oriented climate change curriculum developed by Asombro with funding from an EPA Environmental Education Grant. Throughout the project, more than 900 students across the state participated, completing hands-on activities to learn about climate change and designing action projects to implement in their school and community. The New Mexico Climate Champions Summit was the culminating event of this two-year project. We were immensely proud and excited to host these incredible students as they demonstrated their leadership as true champions of the future in climate change mitigation!



Students from Santa Rosa discuss their project to implement a recycling program for their city.



Dr. Dave Dubois, New Mexico State Climatologist, gives the keynote address.



The Climate Change and the Community Q&A session featured Scott Burns (Positive Energy Solar), Rhonda Diaz (City of Las Cruces), and Julian Reyes (USDA Climate Hub).

THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the generous donors in the fourth quarter of 2017.

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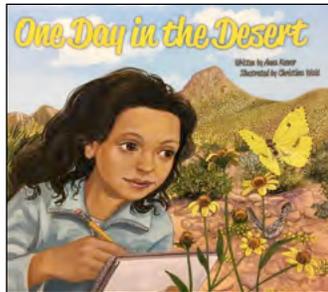


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New Children's Book Celebrates the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park

Former Asombro staff member Anna Keener may have moved away from Las Cruces, but her love of the desert and education continues through her fantastic new book, One Day in the Desert.



The book follows Mariana, a third grade student from Las Cruces. Mariana becomes pen pals with students in French Polynesia and Washington state. When they ask her questions about the desert, she worries it will never compare to the coral reef and forest ecosystems where they live.

Mariana's view of the desert completely changes when she and her class take a field trip to the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park. After a series of exciting discoveries, Mariana can't wait to tell her friends about the desert and then go outside to explore and learn more on her own.

The book is part of a series focused on Long-Term Ecological Research sites. It was published by Muddy Boots Books and is available to purchase now.

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