

# Asombro Insights

*Science education for eager minds*

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 28, Issue 2 (April - June 2019)

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## 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 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades. PNM Resources Foundation provided funding to support the workshop through a grant to Asombro.

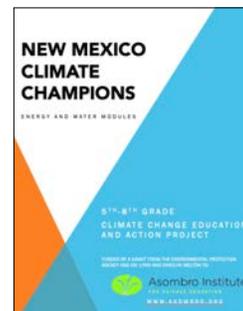
Participating teachers all reported significant gains in their knowledge and confidence using the standards following the workshop. They will continue to work with Asombro staff this spring through NGSS-aligned lessons Asombro will bring into their 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade science classes.



*On March 18, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 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 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 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	25-26 Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam	18-21 Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns
2-Feb STEM Day for Girls - Wildlife Biology	25-Feb Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam	18-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - White Sands Lizards
2-Feb Scientist Saturday	26-Feb Lynn MS - Data Jam	18-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories
4-Feb Sunrise Elem (GISD) - Properties of Matter	26-Feb Las Cruces Host Lions Club	18-Mar Deming Public Schools - Teacher Workshop
4-Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam	26 & 28 Feb Mesilla Park Elem - Science Interns	19-Mar Sierra & Lynn MS - Data Jam
5 & 7 Feb Monte Vista Elem - Science Interns	27-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam	19-Mar Tombaugh Elem - Life Cycles
5-Feb Vista MS - Insulating You/ Insulating Earth	27-Feb LC Catholic - Desert Stories	19-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam
7-Feb Sunrise Elem - Life Cycles	28-Feb Mesa & Vista MS - Data Jam	20-Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Night
7-Feb Zia MS - Data Jam	2-Mar Scientist Saturday	20-Mar LC Catholic - Desert Stories & Plant a Seed
8-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam	4-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam	20-Mar Mesa MS - Data Jam
8 & 11 Feb Riverside (GISD) - Science Interns	4-7 Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns	21-Mar Sierra & Lynn & Vista MS - Data Jam
11-12 Feb Vista MS - Decomposition	5-Mar Sierra & Lynn MS - Data Jam	21-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad. - Data Jam
11-Feb Sierra MS - Data Jam	5-Mar Mesilla Valley Leadership Acad - Data Jam	22-Mar Rio Grande Elem (Hatch) - Career Day
12 & 15 Feb Monte Vista Elem - Sci. Interns	7-Mar Mesa & Vista MS - Data Jam	22-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories
13-Feb Columbia Elem - field trip	7-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Desert Stories	25-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Life Cycles & Properties of Matter
13-Feb Desert Hills Elem - Science Night	8 & 11 Mar Columbia Elem - field trip	26-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Structure and Function of Plants
14-Feb Zia MS - Data Jam	9-Mar AAUW - Girls Can!	27-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Schoolyard Diversity
15-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam	11-14 Mar Monte Vista Elem - Science Interns	28-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Sun & Shade in the Schoolyard
15-Feb Sierra MS - Veg. Measurements	11-Mar Tombaugh Elem - Life Cycles	29-Mar Ruben S Torres (Deming) - Young Arthropod ID
19-Feb Red Mountain MS (Deming) - Energy Transfers	12-Mar Columbia Elem - Patterns of Survival	
19-20 Feb Riverside (GISD) - Sci. Interns	13-Mar Zia MS - Data Jam	
20-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam	13-Mar J Paul Taylor Acad - Data Jam	
20-Feb LC Catholic - Insulating You/ Insulating Earth & Human Impacts	13-Mar Valley View Elem - Science Night	
21-Feb J Paul Taylor Acad - Desert Stories	14-Mar Vista MS - Science Night	
21 & 25 Feb Mesilla Park Elem - Sci. Interns	15-Mar University Hills Elem - Structure and Function of Plants	
22-Feb Picacho MS - Data Jam	15-Mar Hillrise Elem - Science Interns	
22-Feb Columbia Elem - field trip	15-Mar Columbia Elem - Desert Stories	
22-Feb Highland Elem - Science Night		

# THANK YOU!

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



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## 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



*Michele Marias, 2019 Second Quarter Wonder Award Recipient*

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!

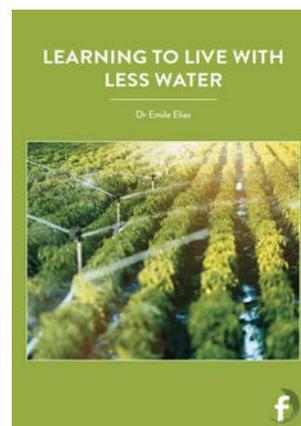
## Nothing "Trivial" about Supporting Science Education

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!



*The trivia night winners on April 2. Congratulations!*

## 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>

## 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](mailto:information@asombro.org) for more information.

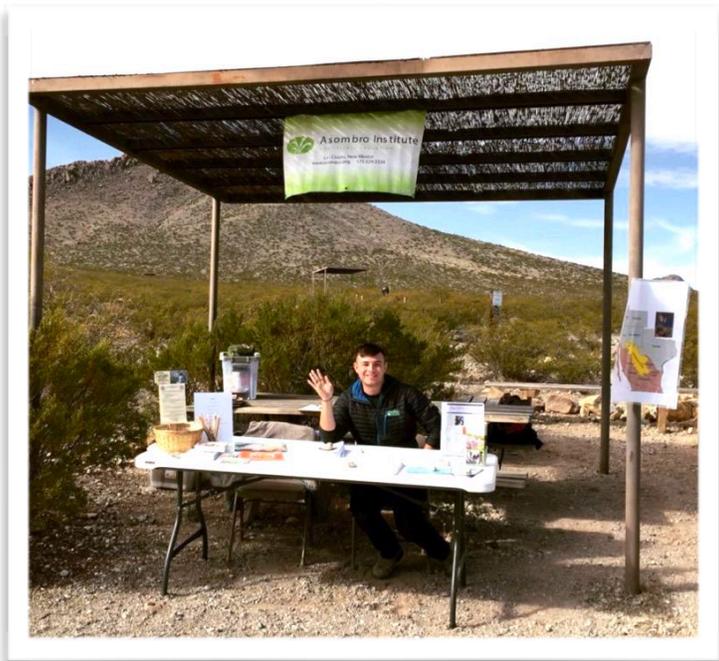


Asombro Institute

FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

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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**

YES! I want to support the  
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