

Asombro Insights

Science education for eager minds

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 4 (October - December 2018)

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Asombro Wins Award!

By Stephanie Bestelmeyer

Asombro was honored to receive the **2018 Outstanding Environmental Education Organization Award** from the Environmental Education Association of New Mexico (EEANM). The award was presented at the statewide Environmental Literacy Summit in Albuquerque on November 10.

EEANM Executive Director Eileen Everett said, "The Asombro Institute for Science Education is recognized as a leader in environmental and science education throughout the state and has been a true inspiration in all of their innovation of programs in response to Next Generation Science Standards. It is inspiring to see how individuals and the organization as a whole has stepped up to contribute to a variety of efforts to advance and promote opportunities for environmental literacy for New Mexico students."

We were delighted to receive this recognition, which we accepted on behalf of hundreds of individuals and groups who make what we do possible. This season of giving thanks seems an especially good time to acknowledge:

- ✱ Our dedicated staff members who work long hours and put so much thought and care into their work to ensure that Asombro programs are delivered to more than 20,000 students each year.
- ✱ Our amazing Board of Directors (listed in the panel on the left) for their dedication of time, thought, and expertise to ensure we have the resources we need to work toward our mission.
- ✱ Our volunteers (for example, see page 3) who assist staff in classrooms and help prepare all the hands-on materials we use in our programs.



Asombro staff members accept the 2018 Outstanding Environmental Education Award: Dakota Domínguez, Rachel Szczytko, Rink Somerday, Ryan Pemberton, EEANM Executive Director Eileen Everett, and Stephanie Bestelmeyer. Stephanie Haan-Amato was not able to attend the award presentation.

- ✱ Our donors who invest their funds in Asombro, helping us work toward a shared vision of scientifically literate youth and adults who appreciate this beautiful place we call home.

This award is a testament to the benefits of working hard, challenging ourselves to continue innovating, and

ensuring we meet the needs of our community.

Many thanks to EEANM for this honor and to all Asombro supporters. This award is for us all!

Fourth Graders Learn about Plant Structures and Functions

Thanks to New Mexico State University professor Dr. Sara Fuentes-Soriano and her team, 4th grade students in our region are learning about herbarium collections and desert plants. Dr. Fuentes-Soriano invited Asombro to create lessons for K-12 students as part of her project to consolidate and update the NMSU herbarium collections.

In June, Asombro staff got to work developing an engaging lesson. The lesson is aligned with the Next

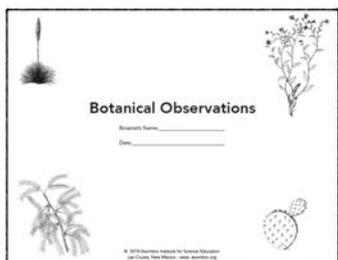
Generation Science Standard's performance expectation for 4th grade: "Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction."

In typical Asombro fashion, we put the local spin on this standard by having students learn about herbaria and gather evidence to help understand the most common shrub in our area: creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*). Using beautiful specimens prepared by Dr. Fuentes-Soriano's team, students gather evidence from leaves, stems, fruits, and seeds in a variety of desert plants. They then use this



Fourth graders use hand magnifiers and desert plant specimens to help understand plant structures and functions in Asombro's new lesson.

Students gather evidence in their Botanical Observations workbook.



evidence to construct an argument about how the structures of a creosote bush work together to help the plant survive.

Education Programs

Thanks to your support, Asombro staff provided 907 hours of science for 21,846 students so far in 2018!

Here are the programs from August - October 2018.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18-Aug Wild Birds Unlimited - Creepy Crawly Critters | 24-Sep Riverside Elem (GISD) - Science Interns | 18/19-Oct Camino Real MS - Data Jam |
| 27/28-Aug Vista MS - Wildlife CSI | 24/25-Sep Mayfield HS - Cycling of Matter | 18-Oct Columbia Elem - Schoolyard Habitat |
| 6-Sep J Paul Taylor Academy - Cycling of Matter | 24/25-Sep Gadsden MS (GISD) - Carbon Cycle | 18-Oct Zia MS - White Sands Lizards |
| 11-Sep Riverside Elem - Science Interns | 26/27-Sep Mayfield HS - Cycling of Matter | 19-Oct Vista MS - Desert Safety |
| 11-Sep NMSU Early Childhood Education | 27-Sep LC Catholic - Science Night | 22/23-Oct Vista MS - White Sands Lizards |
| 11-Sep Red Mountain MS (Deming) - Carbon Cycle | 28-Sep Riverside Elem (GISD) - Structures of Plants | 22/23-Oct LC Catholic - Science Interns |
| 12-Sep Red Mountain MS (Deming) - Energy Transfer | 1-Oct J Paul Taylor Acad. - Science Interns | 22-Oct Lynn MS - Energy Transfer |
| 13-Sep Sierra MS - veg measurements | 1/2-Oct Las Cruces HS - Cycling of Matter | 23-Oct Columbia Elem - Life Cycles |
| 13-Sep J Paul Taylor Acad. - I'm a Scientist, Too | 2/3-Oct J Paul Taylor Acad. - Science Interns | 24-Oct LC Catholic - Plant Adaptations |
| 14-Sep Sierra MS - field trip | 3/4-Oct Las Cruces HS - Cycling of Matter | 24-Oct Centennial HS - Cycling of Matter |
| 17-Sep Riverside Elem (GISD) - Science Interns | 4-Oct LC Catholic - field trip | 25-Oct Columbia Elem - Structures of Plants |
| 17/18-Sep Mayfield HS - Cycling of Matter | 5-Oct J Paul Taylor Acad. - Science Interns | 25-Oct J Paul Taylor Acad. - Plant Adapt. |
| 18-Sep Riverside Elem (GISD) - Science Interns | 8/9-Oct Las Cruces HS - Cycling of Matter | 25-Oct Centennial HS - Cycling of Matter |
| 19/20-Sep Mayfield HS - Cycling of Matter | 11-Oct Centennial HS - Cycling of Matter | 26-Oct LC Catholic - Science Interns |
| 19-Sep LC Catholic - Cycling of Matter / Numbers & Counting | 13-Oct St Paul's UMC - Skins & Skulls | 26-Oct Zia MS - Energy Transfer |
| 20/21-Sep Mayfield HS - Cycling of Matter | 15/16-Oct Centennial HS - Cycling of Matter | 26-Oct Lynn MS - Energy Transfer |
| | 15/16-Oct Mesilla Valley Lead Acad. - Energy Transfer | 29-Oct Onate HS - Cycling of Matter |
| | 15-Oct Columbia Elem - Young Arthropod ID | 29/30-Oct Picacho MS - White Sands Lizards |
| | 16-Oct Zia MS - White Sands Lizards | 29-Oct LC Catholic - Science Interns |
| | | 30/31-Oct Onate HS - Cycling of Matter |
| | | 30/31-Oct Sierra MS - Energy Transfer |
| | | 31-Oct LC Catholic - See It Little/See It Big |

4th Quarter Wonder Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service: David Hutchinson

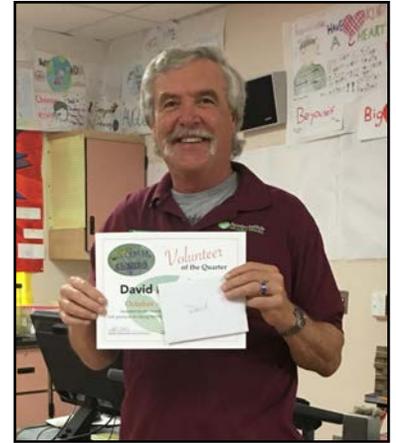
By Stephanie Haan-Amato

How can six Asombro staff members possibly pair up to deliver more than 30 one-hour lessons in one week and get all of the materials ready to do so? We can't! Our amazing volunteers make it possible, and we appreciate them more than we can say. That's why we honor one outstanding volunteer per quarter with our **Wonder Award**.

We are incredibly grateful for our WONDER-ful Wonder Award recipient for the 4th quarter, David Hutchinson! David is one of our longest-serving volunteers, and he has helped--as he would say--"stomp out some ignorance" quite a bit in his years with us.

David started volunteering with Asombro in 2007. Luckily, he decided to volunteer with us when he retired

from teaching. Over the years, he has helped with an enormous number of field trips and classroom programs, and he is fantastic with students. He has also been a regular part of our Nature Park events, and he volunteered every year that we held our Desert Dash Trail Race fundraiser. Plus, he has a terrific sense of humor and makes everything more fun!



THANK YOU!

We are grateful to the generous donors in the third quarter of 2018.

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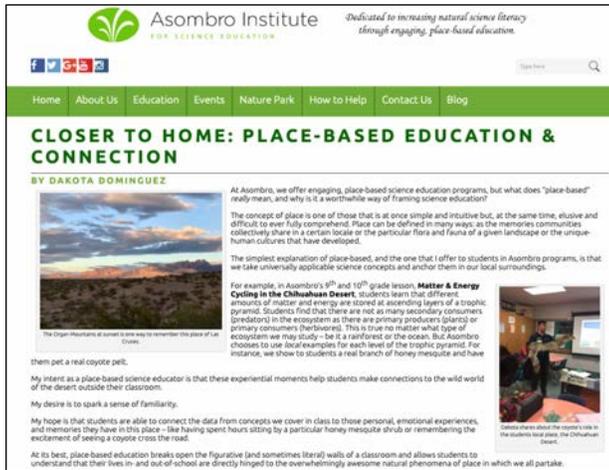
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❤️ ❤️ Volunteers are the Heart of Asombro ❤️ ❤️

In this season of Thanksgiving, the staff of Asombro is grateful for our wonderful volunteers who selflessly give their time, talents, and passions. Monthly volunteer gatherings bring volunteers together to help with the "behind the scenes" tasks like prepping classroom materials, folding newsletters, and more. Volunteers who venture into the classroom or on field trips are ever ready with that second set of hands to help students with the lesson. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Rink at rink@asombro.org or 575-524-3334. We look forward to having you join our team!



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Do you want to read more from Asombro? Check out our blog at www.asombro.org. It includes a behind-the-scenes glimpse at Asombro. For example, recent posts include:

- An explanation of place-based education from Dakota
- Details on our newest high school lesson from Stephanie
- Highlights of being a Community Environmental Education Fellow from Ryan

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