

**2009 Grant Report**  
Asombro Institute for Science Education  
Hands-on Science in Gadsden School District Classrooms

**Background and Project Description:**

In March 2009, the Asombro Institute for Science Education received a \$1,000 grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico. The purpose of the grant was to provide hands-on science education programs in 24 classrooms at some of the most underserved schools in Doña Ana County. These classroom presentations are part of the Asombro Institute's *Science in the Classroom Program*, which includes 35 hands-on, inquiry-based classroom lessons for four grade levels (K-2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>). Each program is aligned with New Mexico science and math standards, allowing teachers and administrators to instantly see the value of each program. Students experience the excitement of science as they conduct experiments, thereby learning not only about their surroundings but also how science really works.

These initial classroom programs often open the doors for teachers who witness the excitement in their students' eyes when they are engaged in hands-on science. Teachers frequently sign up for our teacher workshops, borrow our Science Investigation Kits, and/or request other programs following the first classroom program. Therefore, a one-hour presentation sows the seeds for additional science education opportunities for each teacher's students for years to come.

**Accomplishments:**

The \$1000 grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico allowed the Asombro Institute for Science Education to present 29 one-hour classroom programs to 610 students in Doña Ana County during 2009. We also successfully leveraged these funds to bring a full suite of science education options (including a teacher workshop, field trips, and classroom programs) to teachers and students.

Shortly after receiving the grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, the Asombro Institute received a separate grant from the New Mexico State Parks' Outdoor Classroom Program. This latter grant funded a teacher workshop and field trips for Gadsden Independent School District (GISD) students. The timing of these grants was ideal, since we were able to use both grants to create a multifaceted program for Gadsden teachers and students.

Using New Mexico State Parks Outdoor Classroom Program funds, we:

- Hosted a workshop for 10 teachers from GISD teachers on April 18, 2009.
- Funded and ran four field trips to the Asombro Institute's Chihuahuan Desert Nature Park for 370 GISD students.

Using Native Plant Society of New Mexico funds, we:

- Presented 17 one-hour classroom programs for 365 GISD students (please see table on the following page for full list of programs). These programs were delivered to students of teachers who attended the April workshop but chose not to take their students on field trips. The teachers were extremely pleased with the programs and commented specifically on (1) how well the programs aligned with their science curriculum, (2) the

age-appropriateness of each program, (3) how well Asombro Institute staff interacted with their students, and (4) how hands-on all of the lessons were.

In August 2009, we learned that a major funder for classroom programs we conduct monthly in the Las Cruces Public Schools had curtailed all grants in 2009 due to economic hardship. This meant that we no longer had funding for classroom programs we conduct with 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students at Valley View Elementary School. At Valley View, 86% of students are classified by the district as economically disadvantaged, and 87% of the students are Hispanic. We were committed to continuing this award-winning program at Valley View, and the grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico allowed us to provide 12 classroom programs for these deserving students between September and November 2009 (please see table below).

**In total, the \$1000 grant from the Native Plant Society of New Mexico brought the excitement of hands-on science to 610 students at five schools in Doña Ana County.** Specifically, these funds supported the following programs:

| Date     | School             | Program                  | Grade Level   | Number of Programs | Number of Students |
|----------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 4/29/09  | La Union Elem.     | Arthropod identification | 2nd & 3rd     | 3                  | 47                 |
| 5/4/09   | La Union Elem.     | Weather                  | 4th           | 4                  | 87                 |
| 5/6/09   | Desert View Elem.  | Desert plant adaptations | 4th           | 3                  | 77                 |
| 5/12/09  | Riverside Elem.    | Arthropod identification | 4th & 5th     | 4                  | 84                 |
| 5/14/09  | Santa Teresa Elem. | Arthropod identification | 3rd           | 3                  | 70                 |
| 9/17/09  | Valley View Elem.  | Scientific process       | 3rd           | 4                  | 86                 |
| 10/22/09 | Valley View Elem.  | Desert plant adaptations | 3rd           | 4                  | 79                 |
| 11/12/09 | Valley View Elem.  | Animal adaptations       | 3rd           | 4                  | 80                 |
|          |                    |                          | <b>TOTALS</b> | <b>29</b>          | <b>610</b>         |

On behalf of these 610 students and 29 teachers, we thank the Native Plant Society of New Mexico for the generous grant which opened students’ eyes to the wonder of science. We are sincerely grateful for your support of science education.

For further information, please contact Executive Director Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer at 575-524-3334 or [stephanie@asombro.org](mailto:stephanie@asombro.org).