

A Note from the Executive Director

If I asked you to quickly name one person who inspired you as a child, other than a parent, who would it be? And why? For me, Mrs. Dwyer immediately comes to mind, my first volleyball coach. She was feisty, worked us hard, and believed in us mightily. As one of two third graders on the team, she gave me an early chance. When I was in high school, she also gave me my first coaching job. My love of the sport continues to this day, thanks to her early encouragement. But as kids, we don't always realize the immense influence that adults can have on us until years later.



Alliance volunteers show up for Santa Fe kids in many ways. And although our volunteers could only interact with students via screens this school year, they continue to help kids feel connected, seen and heard. This is essential because research shows that academic success doesn't happen without social/emotional success. Did you know that New Mexico once again ranks 50th in the nation on 16 factors of child well-being? ([Learn more here.](#)). We've all experienced some level of trauma this year, but it's been an unbelievable year for students and teachers.

In this newsletter you'll learn more about some of the ways our volunteers are partnering with teachers to help kids feel safe, inspire their curiosity and show them that they matter. As tutors, mentors and STEM fair judges, our volunteers contribute to whole child well-being, first and foremost. As COVID restrictions lift, our volunteers will have even more opportunities to encourage and inspire students, just as someone on our path did for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Smogor".

Diane Smogor, Executive Director

Covid-Safe STEM FAIRS

Due to COVID-19, the Santa Fe Public School (SFPS) district opted to host a virtual STEM fair for

SFPS Competitive District STEM Fair

Santa Fe Public Schools
2020-2021

schools interested in participating. This year's STEM fair – while it looked and felt very different – still gave SFPS students the chance to show off their work and discuss their project with a judge. [MORE](#)

School Tutoring: A Runaway Success

Since November, Ken Prokuski of the SFAPS has been remotely mentoring two groups of 4th grade children in math at Nina Otero Community School in Santa Fe through the Alliance *Adopt-A-Scientist* Program. He is supplementing the usual syllabus that Brenda Dominguez, their teacher, is pursuing.

“The new curriculum moves quickly through concepts,” said Brenda. “Part of our success is that Ken and I have weekly communication and share resources. The need for math support in online teaching is ongoing. The fact that I had someone to come in and provide that support was incredible.”

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Nina Otero Community School 4th graders show their understanding with a thumbs up during an online tutoring session with Ken Prokuski.

STEAM Day at El Camino Real Academy



Board Member Hubert van Hecke discusses Fibonacci numbers in nature during one of his interactive presentations at ECRA STEAM day.

More than 250 students at El Camino Real Academy (ECRA) in grades 5-8 engaged in a variety of hands-on activities at the Jan. 29 virtual STEAM Day, organized by ECRA grade 3 teacher Alicia Ayala. “STEAM Day was excellent,” Alicia said. “Both students, families and staff enjoyed the engaging presentations. The feedback that we received from families was very positive.” Six Alliance volunteers led lessons that day, ranging from understanding Microbits to discovering how the brain and nerves control our movement.

Global Garbage Patches



Each month, the Santa Fe Indian School/Café Scientifique-New Mexico organizes an interactive Teen Science Café, with support from the Santa Fe Alliance for Science and other community partners. At the Feb. 26 Café, middle and high school students from Santa Fe, Taos and Indonesia learned about garbage patches (large areas of marine debris concentration) from Desiray Wilson, NASA Associate Scientific Programmer. Wilson introduced students to garbage patches in the world’s oceans and their implications

throughout the globe. Science Café teen leaders also led breakout rooms with activities on the NASA story maps website.

Teacher Tribute



Hope Cahill demonstrates a scientific principle in her 6th-grade classroom.

Hope Cahill, A Passion for Science

Santa Fe Public Schools is blessed with many talented science teachers. This article is the first of a series to acknowledge outstanding STEM teachers, especially in the darkness of these remote-learning times. We hope you'll [send us the names](#) of others you would like to see recognized.

[Read about Eldorado science teacher Hope Cahill.](#)

Donor Spotlight: Avalon Trust

Avalon Trust has financially supported the Santa Fe Alliance for Science for the past six years. According to Julia Peters, Avalon Trust's Chief Counsel and one of the firm's three partners, "The Alliance is an incredible asset to Santa Fe. We love the structure of the organization, how it takes advantage of local talent, and the volunteer structure. It is a very lean and unique organization; it's essentially a network of experts that are being leveraged to educate our teachers and young budding scientists and mathematicians."



Avalon partners (L-R) Julia Peters, Andrew Wallerstein, and Christine McDermott.

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Thank you to the generous individuals who support our work, and to the following organizations and businesses who make this all possible.

- Buckman Family Fund
- Celia Lipton Farris & Victor W. Farris Foundation
- Covid-19 Response Fund
- Las Campanas Community Fund
- Susan & Conrad De Jong Fund



**Help us to inspire more young STEM learners
by making a gift today!**

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