Santa Fe Science Café for Young Thinkers

"A Year in the Life of the Curiosity Mars Rover"

Nina Lanza

Los Alamos National Laboratory

Wednesday, September 11
6:00-7:30 PM

Georgia O'Keeffe Museum
Education Annex
123 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe

The Mars Science Laboratory rover "Curiosity" has been on the surface of Mars for over one Earth year. With ten instruments onboard a vehicle the size of a Mini Cooper, Curiosity is the most able rover ever sent to Mars. The goal of the mission is to find out whether Mars could have ever supported life. Since all life on Earth requires liquid water, finding signs of past and present water is an important part of Curiosity's work. In this past year, she has discovered abundant evidence that her landing site, Gale crater, has had flowing liquid water in it. As exciting as this is, there is more to come--the mission is currently only halfway through its planned lifetime. Curiosity is now en route to Mt. Sharp, a mountain of sediments ~18,000 feet high in the center of the crater, to investigate what appear to be layers of water-formed minerals. Come hear the latest results from the rover mission and learn about what it's like to command one of the rover instruments, ChemCam, from a laptop in Los Alamos.

Admission is Free. Youth (ages 13-19) seating a priority. Light refreshments will be served. Nina will also appear at 8:30 AM the same day on the **Santa Fe Radio Café** (KSFR 101.1 FM) with host Mary Charlotte, and streaming from www.ksfr.org.

Nina is currently a postdoctoral fellow at LANL. She was born and raised in Boston, MA and was educated at Smith College, Wesleyan University, and the University of New Mexico where she received a PhD. She is currently living her dream of working on a spaceship with lasers on Mars as part of the ChemCam team.

Sponsors: Santa Fe Alliance for Science; Santa Fe Public Schools; Georgia O'Keeffe Museum; Fractal Foundation. Call 603-7468 for more information.