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STEM Starts Early at Science Day Lab

Las Cruces – Elementary school students from Tombaugh Elementary got their hands dirty performing experiments and learning the anatomy and function of several different body systems during Elementary Science Day at Doña Ana Community College (DACC).

DACC full- and part-time science faculty and elementary science teachers and parents from Clyde W. Tombaugh Elementary School worked with students and modeled proper laboratory procedures and laboratory safety while presenting hands on activities.

“It is never too early to get students involved and excited about science and work in the lab,” said event organizer, Dr. Ratna Pankayastselvan. “It gives our faculty great satisfaction and happiness to share knowledge with these young children.” “We want to instill a strong interest in science and hope these students will choose a STEM career when they are ready,” she added.

Students identified the ethnicity and gender of various human skulls, used iPads to see how the human heart works, learned about different organs, identified a mystery powder and learned how to make slime. Students made their own slime and took it home to show their parents.

Pankayastselvan is the Program Director of the DACC Science Department which provides required classes for all allied health degrees and awards the Associate of Science degree at the community college. A variety of science classes are taught that allow college students to become proficient in laboratory procedures and science knowledge from courses such as anatomy, physiology, chemistry, human biology and microbiology.

“We want to give our students an opportunity to see the possibilities for post-high school education,” said Bernadine Cotton of Clyde Tombaugh Elementary School. “This activity emphasizes the importance of math and science and gives students the opportunity to enjoy these subjects.”

Eighty-eight students began their day at 9 am and participated in activities throughout the morning. Science Day was held at DACC for the 7th year for the Tombaugh students.



DACC Professor Ratna Pankayastselvan helps an elementary student fill a test tube with water. [photo: Betsy Baquera]



DACC Professor Hiranya Roychowdhury displays a model of a human brain. [photo: Betsy Baquera]