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Lab, Foundation and School District Collaborate on Virtual Scientist Engagement Program

What do you want to ‘Ask a Scientist?’

That was the question posed to local middle and high school students via a collaborative series launched this month by Lawrence Livermore National Lab, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District and the Livermore Lab Foundation.

The four-part program is providing virtual resources to local students interested in science and engineering via video demonstrations and live Zoom discussions with LLNL scientists as they explain their work and showcase experiments in physics, space and planetary defense, environmental science and physical science.

“LLNL produced a great series of short videos from Lab scientists and engineers demonstrating various science concepts,” said Sally Allen, Executive Director of the Livermore Lab Foundation. “We felt there was an opportunity to showcase these videos and partner with the school district to supplement the online learning now occurring due to COVID-19.”

The four videos were shared with LVJUSD administrators and science teachers, with key learning objectives, terminology and the relevant Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) identified. Students were encouraged to watch the videos on their home computers and send questions to the Livermore Lab Foundation. The students could then attend an interactive one-hour follow up Zoom meeting with the Lab scientists to hear more on the subject and get their questions answered.

“Given our current circumstances requiring distance learning, we wanted to explore new programs to enhance the learning environment. This is exactly the type of innovation that helps our students stay engaged. We’re grateful to both the Foundation and the Lab for the opportunity to collaborate,” said Kelly Bowers, Superintendent of Schools for the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District.

“We appreciate the opportunity to directly engage with our local students, said LLNL External Relations Officer Nadine Horner. “The passion of the scientists featured in the videos is inspiring and we hope it will encourage students to consider careers in these fields.”

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The four interactive ‘Ask a Scientist’ programs offered in May are:

- Make a Backyard Crater with a Planetary Defense Physicist (Dr. Megan Bruck Syal)
- Staying Entertained with Physics (Dr. Leland Ellison)
- What Does an Atmospheric Scientist at LLNL Do? (Dr. Jessica Osuna)
- Edible Aquifer Experiment (Monique Warren, Environmental Engineer)

The videos are available to the general public on the LLNL’s YouTube Channel.

Additional information on the Ask A Scientist Program and the follow up question and answer Zoom sessions can be found at livermorelabfoundation.org

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Caption with picture:

Atmospheric scientist Dr. Jessica Osuna is one of four Lab employees featured in the ‘Science at Home/Ask A Scientist’ virtual program created in a special collaboration by the Livermore Lab Foundation, the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, and LLNL.

About The Livermore Lab Foundation:

The Livermore Lab Foundation is an IRS recognized 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 2016 to provide philanthropic support for critical scientific research initiatives, technology development, STEM programs and internships at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. For more information, visit livermorelabfoundation.org

About Lawrence Livermore National Lab:

Founded in 1952, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory provides solutions to our nation’s most important national security challenges through innovative science, engineering and technology. Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory is managed by Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC for the U.S. Department of Energy’s National Nuclear Security Administration.

About Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District

LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit www.livermoreschools.org

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