



Press Release

Friday November 6, 2009

Intergenerational Hands-on Marine Science Program, Ocean FEST, Begins on O'ahu

After over a year of program development and field-testing, the new, intergenerational hands-on marine science program, Ocean FEST will be launched next week. The program engages elementary school teachers, students and their parents in Ocean FEST family science nights based on a proven model. FEST stands for Families Exploring Science Together, and research has shown that family involvement in science education adds significant value to the experience. This program is primarily aimed at broadening participation in the ocean and earth sciences, with the goal of interesting students in marine and geosciences, as well as other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. A second goal is to communicate that ocean and earth science is directly relevant and applicable to Hawai'i.



Dr. Barbara Bruno, education coordinator for the Center for Microbial Oceanography: Research and Education (C-MORE) and Carlie Wiener, Northwest Hawaiian Islands Research and Outreach Program Specialist at the Hawai'i Institute of Marine Biology, both of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, are the program founders and lead instructors. "We are very excited about this program; it gives both parents and students an opportunity to learn together about the importance of our oceans and the exciting career opportunities in marine sciences," says Wiener. "We're especially interested in engaging students from groups that have been traditionally underrepresented. A local, diverse geoscience workforce in Hawaii's next generation will be critical to tackling the urgent local problems posed by our rapidly changing environment."



This three-year, state-wide program funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) will offer twenty events annually held at public and charter schools and community event programs. Seed funding to conduct pilot events was provided by the State of Hawai'i (Act 111). Modeled after Art and Rene Kimura's highly successful space-themed family science nights, Ocean FEST engages students in grades 3-6 and their parents in hands-on science

activities and demonstrations that explore the wonders of the ocean world. Ocean FEST is offered free of charge to participating schools; the two-hour program covers topics such as coral reef ecosystems, marine microbes, ocean properties and climate change. The program is preceded by a professional development component for teachers so that the activities can be brought into the classrooms as well.

The Ocean FEST event series kicks off with two events on O'ahu: Kamaile Academy in Wai'anae on November 10, followed by Pearl City Elementary on November 16.

For more information on the program please visit oceanfest.soest.hawaii.edu or contact Dr. Barbara Bruno (808) 956-0901 or Carlie Wiener (808) 628-8666.



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The School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was established by the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i in 1988 in recognition of the need to realign and further strengthen the excellent education and research resources available within the University. SOEST brings together four academic departments, three research institutes, several federal cooperative programs, and support facilities of the highest quality in the nation to meet challenges in the ocean, earth and planetary sciences and technologies.

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