

## The Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC)-New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program

We believe that New Orleans students need a strong educational foundation in the sciences and should be exposed to professional role models from the scientific community to enhance their academic enthusiasm and opportunity for success.

The goals of the program include:

- making science more interesting, easier to understand, and accessible in the classroom through hands-on science activities in coordination with the school administrators and teachers based on their current curriculum
- improving 4th grade science standardized test scores
- exposing 4th graders attending New Orleans public, charter, and recovery district schools to positive and diverse science professionals and trainees as role models

Volunteer instructors include students, post-doctoral fellows, and faculty from the Schools of Graduate Studies, Medicine, Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Public Health, and Nursing. Currently we teach at the four partner schools, St. Peter Claver School, Langston Hughes Academy Charter School, Medard Nelson Charter School and Good Shepherd School several times a month. We plan to partner with additional New Orleans Schools in the near future. The Director of the LSU-New Orleans School Science Partnership Program is Dr. Fern Tsien, faculty from the Department of Genetics.

To volunteer for the Science Partnership, [click here](#).



From left to right: Dr. Kathleen McDonough, Professor and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Director of MD/PhD Program, Director of Interdisciplinary Program; Dr. Fern Tsien Director of the LSUHSC New Orleans Schools Science Partnership Program; and Dr. Joseph Moerschbaeher, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Dean, School of Graduate Studies



From left to right: Dr. Andrew Hollenbach, Associate Professor, Department of Genetics; Ayesha Umrigar, Interdisciplinary Program graduate student; Dr. Tsien; and Leigh Smith-Vaniz, Coordinator of Student Affairs.



Elaine Maggi at St. Peter Claver



Brooks Lowery at Good Shepherd School



Kashanda Foley at St. Peter Claver



Kathryn Lee at St. Peter Claver



Patrick Raber at Good Shepherd School



Dr. Tsien & Elaine Maggi at St. Peter Claver



David Ward at Good Shepherd School



Dr. Tsien at St. Peter Claver School



Kashanda Foley at St. Peter Claver



Medical student Katelyn Robillard at Langston Hughes

## LSUHSC-New Orleans School Science Partnership Program Field Day

The year-long program culminates with a field trip to LSUHSC. This past spring we had more than 100 children attending. LSUHSC laboratory activities included: DNA isolation from strawberries by Dr. Fern Tsien, Ayesha Umrigar, Elaine Maggi, and Ciera Singleton (Genetics); human organ demonstrations including the effects of smoking on the human lungs by Kayla Fuselier (Genetics), Steven Eastlack (MD/PhD and Biochemistry), Hannah Albritton (MD/PhD and MIP), Dr. Rafael Velasquez (MIP); activity on blood components by Dr. Rebecca Fisher (Cancer Center), Catherine Kim (Biochem), Chelsey Walker (Genetics), Dr. Sonia Gasparini (Neurosciences), and Mary Moore (Genetics and Biostatistics/Public Health). They also received inspirational talks by Dr. Allison Augustus-Wallace (Office of Diversity and Community Engagement) and Dr. Dereck Rovaris (Diversity Vice-Provost for LSU).

Leigh Smith-Vaniz (School of Graduate Studies), Srihari Korrapati and Joseph DeCorte (St. Martin's Episcopal School interns), and Ms. Martha Cuccia (Health Policy and Systems Management/Public health) escorted the 4<sup>th</sup> graders to the various laboratory activities. Teachers were awarded prizes, and children received books and comic books donated by the LSUHSC Campus wide Book Drive. Dr. Fern Tsien, Dr. Dereck Rovaris, Kashanda Foley, Dr. Allison Augustus-Wallace, Dr. Abhilash Ponnath

(Neurosciences), Dr. Sonia Gasparini (Neurosciences), Leigh Smith-Veniz (Graduate Studies), Kusma Pyakurel (Pharmacology), and Salome Ibba (Cancer Center) handed out the lunches and books.



Genetics graduate student Ciera Singleton isolating strawberry DNA



Dr. Dereck Rovaris, Vice Provost for Diversity at Louisiana State University, speaks to the group.



Genetics graduate student Kayla Fuselier demonstrating human organs.



Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Parasitology graduate student Rafael Velasquez.



MD/PhD student Hannah Albritton demonstrating human organs.





Dr. Sonia Gasparini (Neurosciences) and Dr. Rebecca Fisher (Stanley S. Scott Cancer Center) demonstrating blood components.



Kashanda Foley assisting with the book donations

Dr. Sonia Gasparini (Neurosciences), Mary Moore (Genetics and Biostatistics/Public Health), and Ms. Martha Cuccia (Health Policy and Systems Management/Pubic Health) helping students to choose 2 books and one comic book to take home.

