UT Arlington Science Ambassadors Approach the 100-Show Mark

The UT Arlington Science Ambassadors are a group of advanced undergraduate science majors who present free science shows to school groups visiting the UTA campus. The typical show lasts around 45 minutes and has 10-12 science demonstrations. These include activities such as:

- Inflating a balloon on a beaker using dry ice
- Using liquid nitrogen to deflate balloons
- Freezing and shattering flowers
- Demonstrating the varied densities of gases by igniting hexane vapors on a ramp
- Burning money (apparently)
- Dissolving Styrofoam cups

The audience favorites have been making elephant toothpaste and setting a teacher’s hand on fire (again, apparently).

The program was started last October with support from the ExxonMobil Foundation and the College of Science. From October 2007 through July 2008, UTA Science Ambassadors performed 95 science shows for over 7000 students from elementary, middle, and high schools in the DFW area. Around three-quarters of the shows were for elementary school children. One show was even performed in Spanish for students in Fort Worth ISD’s College and Me program.

Almost all Science Ambassador activities take place on the UTA campus, but the Ambassadors do travel occasionally. They have served as science fair judges and attended local schools’ Math and Science Nights. They have also participated in an all-day Math and Science Retreat for students of Fort Worth ISD’s Riverside Middle School.

The science show was initially developed by Dr. Greg Hale, based on demonstrations that he and Dr. Fred MacDonnell have done for UTA visitors and at area schools for many years. Science Ambassadors Quynh Pham, Nathan Roehr, and Benjamin Egusquiza added new and revised demonstrations over the past year.

The program is administered by Dr. Carrie Baum. If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail Carrie at cbaum@uta.edu.