

## **BACKGROUND**

San Diego Science Alliance is a non-profit consortium of leaders committed to science literacy in K-12 education in San Diego County. The consortium includes businesses, K-12 educators, colleges and scientific institutions. The San Diego Science Alliance was founded in 1995 to create and support science education programs. Since its formation, the Science Alliance has sponsored projects to connect teachers with local resources to enrich education in science and technology.

With the active participation of many of San Diego's biotechnology, telecommunications and other science- and engineering-centered companies, the Science Alliance is uniquely positioned to assist and encourage science teachers and their students. The involvement of educators allows the Science Alliance to inform the business community about educational issues that need to be addressed at the district or state level.

Initially, the Science Alliance projects created networks to better acquaint teachers with local scientific community resources. These types of projects remain important aspect of the Science Alliance's efforts. The *Science Alliance Resource Catalog* is available to local teachers, business leaders, parents, and students. Hundreds of teachers and business leaders attend SDSA's educational and program events each year. The organization's email Science Alert service provides current information about local events and resources and is accessed by almost 3000 teachers. SDSA's Web page ([www.sdsa.org](http://www.sdsa.org)) is an essential networking tool used by both educators and students.

SDSA is committed to enhancing teacher professional development through programs such as *Partnerships Involving the Scientific Community in Elementary Schools* (PISCES) project. PISCES is a Science Alliance project, which received major funding from the National Science Foundation and other industry and foundation supporters. PISCES brings university science graduate students into elementary classrooms to assist elementary educators with science instruction. The project features enriched inquiry-based science curriculum, workshops and seminars for the graduate students and the classroom teachers, and utilizes the San Diego County Office of Education's educational technology resources. In recent years dozens of San Diego area school districts have partnered with the PISCES project for instructional support and professional development in K-8 science. The *Middle School Education Leadership Initiative* (MSSELI) is a program developed by the San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego Unified School District, The San Diego Foundation, and the San Diego Science Alliance. The goal of MSSELI is to identify lead science teachers from San Diego City and County middle schools. Once identified, these teachers participate in an intensive summer and academic year professional development program focused on science content,

leadership strategies, and collaboration with area public and private scientific institutions.

Specific student populations are targeted by activities such as the *Better Education for Women in Science and Engineering (BE WiSE)* program, the annual *High Tech Fair* for 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students, and the annual Botball robotics competition. The *Get SSET (Get Sport Science, Engineering and Technology) Academy* is a 4-day and 3-night academic Academy for girls entering grades 9-10. Fun, educational hands-on activities introduce young women to the basic physical science, math, and engineering of sports. The academy focuses on empowering female students with technical skills and success through exciting sports science lectures and hands-on activities.

A new program, The *Latino Health and Science Career Connections* project is a collaborative effort between SDSA, healthcare and education organizations to encourage Latino students to study science and health in high school. This program, which targets high school health academies and pathways, is the most recent collaborative effort between SDSA and healthcare and education organizations. The purpose is to encourage Latino students to study science and health in middle and high school and enhance Latino students' health and science education experience. Through the LHSCC project, SDSA and the collaborative partners seek to provide resources and recommendations to existing and future health academies, college level educators, and industry leaders that can be utilized to engage Latino students to pursue life science studies and health careers.

In addition to programs and resources for students and teachers, the Science Alliance annually recognizes outstanding examples of business/education collaboration in its *Partnership Awards Program*.

For more information about the San Diego Science Alliance, please contact Nancy Taylor, Executive Director at [ntaylor@sdcoe.net](mailto:ntaylor@sdcoe.net).