

WINTER 2023 Newsletter



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Happy Holiday Season to Everyone!

Since returning from our summer break, we at AWIS-SD have been out in our community presenting information tabling at outreach events and welcoming new members at both our annual Open House and Fall Happy Hour. These events would not have been possible or as successful as they were without our fantastic Events Committee, specifically Agnes Antwan, who planned and coordinated them. Anyone who attended either of these events, is encouraged to let Agnes know what excellent work she does.

The Website Committee continues to work diligently on finalizing and activating our new website. I was recently informed that it should be live no later than the new year. We are excited to start 2024 with a fresh new look for AWIS-SD's online presence.

We have several committees who are looking for members to step up into leadership roles or as committee members. Our Scholarship, Newsletter, and Events Committees are specifically looking for members who would be interested in becoming co-chairs. These leadership roles vary based on the committee, but all guarantee the opportunity to gain experience with managing a group of individuals that is beneficial to us all.

Our AWIS-SD board is also in the process of looking for new members. We are specifically in need of a Treasurer and board members at large. For more information on these positions, please reach out to me.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in the activities of our chapter, check out the description of all our committees [here](#). All are actively recruiting new members and the chapter, overall, would love to get more people involved. Meetings and any upcoming events can be found on our [website calendar](#).

Best,

Rose

Rose Presby, PhD

President, AWIS-SD

president@awissd.org



HERA HUB

La Jolla . Mission Valley . Carlsbad

WORK FROM HOME?

Escape the distractions
of home for a safe,
supportive workspace

HeraHub.com

PROFESSIONAL . PRODCUTIVE . PROSPEROUS

AWIS San Diego 2023 Open House

By Agnes Antwan

On October 25, 2023, AWIS San Diego hosted its annual Open House at SOVA Science District, with food catered by The Craft Taco and drinks by New English Brewing. The open house gave the AWIS-SD organization the opportunity to introduce itself to the science community and to recruit new members by presenting the diverse events, activities and committees that it offers.

Committee booths were set up with chairs and co-chairs were present to discuss the committee's focus and role in the organization. There were great discussions with current and prospective members, which encouraged many to join AWIS that night! All attendees received AWIS swag bags, which included items from our sponsors. Thank you to our sponsors and partners! People who are interested in more events like this can go to awissd.org for more information, or contact the Events Committee at events@awissd.org



Join Our Team of Knowledge-Sharing Experts!

UC San Diego Division of Extended Studies is seeking instructors!

Become part of a mission-driven organization dedicated to lifelong knowledge and skill development.

- Bioinformatics & Biostatistics
 - Drug Discovery & Development
 - Regulatory Affairs
 - Basic Sciences
- Flexible Schedule
 - Completely Online
 - Complimentary Courses for Instructors
- Inspire and empower others through the joy of learning!

APPLY HERE:
<https://extendedstudies.ucsd.edu/community-and-research/collaborate-with-us/teach-for-us>

PLEASE SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
APPLIEDSCIENCE@UCSD.EDU

UC San Diego
 EXTENDED STUDIES

Fairy Tale Ball Delights Attendees with STEM Fun

By Jamillah Murtadha

San Diego's Mission Valley Branch Library was transformed into a magical land of fairy tales and science experiments on Saturday, October 27th, as the All Girls STEM Society, AWIS Outreach, Legacy Causeplay, San Diego Parks and Recreation, and the Friends of Mission Valley Library hosted the Fairy Tale Ball. More than 200 people attended the two-hour event, filled with exciting activities that kept everyone engaged. The attendees had great expectations for the event, and the organizers did not disappoint. Attendees enjoyed scavenger hunts, face-painting, crafts, games, and experiments. The highlight of the event was the two scientific demonstrations/experiments hosted by AWIS Outreach Committee.



At one table, Jamillah Murtadha, Tiffany Naing, and Cristina Rodriguez demonstrated the Bubbling Cauldron experiment, which involved mixing a few household ingredients and dry ice to create a bubbling potion. The participants learned about the science and the effects of dry ice, water, and soap.

At another table, Rose Presby, Xingxiu Pan, Zack Deane, and Megan Routzong experimented with cornstarch and a warm water mixture (Oobleck), which we called Dragon/Ogre Snot in the theme of the Fairy Tale Ball. The participants learned about this gooey substance called Oobleck, which has the properties of both a liquid and a solid. The event was a great success, and the participants were delighted with the fun-filled activities. In fact, the activities at our tables were such a hit that some participants returned for a second or even third round of fun and learning.

The feedback from this event was overwhelmingly positive. A big thank you to the Halloween Heros who helped me make this event a success: Rose Presby, Megan Routzong, Tiffany Naing, Xingxiu Pan, Zack Deane, and Cristina Rodriguez. The Fairy Tale Ball was a perfect example of how STEM education can be made fun and accessible to everyone. We look forward to attending more such events in the future!





AWIS Board Member/Co-Chair Picnic and Meeting: Fostering Collaboration and Connection

By Sameera Bilgrami

The Association for Women in Science (AWIS) recently hosted a delightful picnic and meeting at the scenic Kate Sessions Park on Saturday, September 16th. This event brought together AWIS board members and co-chairs, fostering collaboration, camaraderie, and an opportunity to strategize for the organization's future endeavors.

Kate Sessions Park is a 79-acre park on Mount Soledad with dazzling views of Mission Bay. It is named after botanist/horticulturist/landscape artist Katherine Olivia Sessions also known as the 'Mother of Balboa Park' due to her planting and growing of about 100 trees a year, imported from around the world in the previously barren park. Nestled amid the lush greenery of Kate Sessions Park, attendees enjoyed a sunny day filled with laughter, engaging discussions, and the beauty of nature as their backdrop. The event was a testament to the AWIS commitment to supporting and empowering women in the field of science.

The picnic/meeting was not just a chance to enjoy the outdoors but also a platform for building valuable connections. Attendees, including distinguished board members and dedicated co-chairs, mingled, and shared insights. The exchange of ideas was palpable as passionate professionals connected on both personal and professional levels.

Everyone gathered around noon with a dish to enjoy under a canopy tent brought by our president Rose Presby. Discussions centered around an update to everyone's current professional and personal lives and their future goals. Board members and co-chairs addressed key issues facing various AWIS-SD chapters and brainstormed ways to involve more members to participate. The organization, execution, and logistics of the upcoming Fall open house were also planned and discussed. The highlight was the achievement of the Corporate Sponsorship Committee that helped raise about \$25,000 for the San Diego Chapter. Donations by biotech companies during a tough financial

market endorse the vision and the ideals that AWIS as an organization stands for. It is also due to the commendable work and initiative taken by the Corporate Sponsorship Committee Co-Chair Kayalvizhi Madhivanan and all the committee members. Congratulations to a job well done!!

The AWIS board member and co-chair picnic/meeting at Kate Sessions Park was a resounding success, reinforcing the organization's commitment to advancing women in science. It was a day of connection, inspiration, and strategic planning that will undoubtedly lead to more opportunities and support for women pursuing careers in science.

If you're passionate about supporting women in science or want to learn more about AWIS and their future events, visit their website and consider becoming a member or attending their next gathering. Together, we can continue to empower and uplift women in the scientific community.

A2I Coffee Club with Chief Operating Officer Dr. Jennifer Huberty

By Frederica Klaus

The A2I Coffee Club held on September 26, 2023 featured Dr. Jennifer Huberty who discussed her journey from academic research to Fractional Chief Science Officer and company founder. Dr. Huberty received her PhD in 2004 from the University of Utah and then continued her scientific career developing community centered women's health interventions, becoming Associate Professor at Arizona State University. She also started working with an online consumer yoga platform and led a NIH grant for a feasibility study using yoga to reduce PTSD symptoms in women. Dr. Huberty then became head of science at Calm before the company's major expansion where she served for five years. Currently she is a Fractional Chief Science Officer at Skylight, Bend Health and Fit Minded (also founder), working for multiple companies at the same time.

Dr. Huberty discussed her experience in detail. She told the group how she reached out to the small company, Calm, at that time with the goal of scientific interaction. This outreach led to her being offered the position as head of science for five years, which marked her transition from academia to industry. Dr. Hubert also emphasized, that it is still possible to successfully apply for NIH funding while working in industry and how this combination can be advantageous to job applicants.

In addition, Dr. Huberty shared her passion for creating evidence-driven innovation in the health technology industry. Drawing from her previous academic research experiences, she expanded her skills towards business aspects. In her current role, she is focused on equipping businesses with scientific expertise and executive scientific leadership so that they can weave science into every inch of their operation for long-term success. Her approach is based on using structures that already exist to help people and then measure the impact of these structures in reaching the intended outcomes.

In a very personal way, Dr. Huberty shared her strategies for success, among them how following her instinct guided her in her career path. She is practicing yoga and meditation in her personal time, which also blends with her scientific career path. Regarding her day-to-day duties, Dr. Huberty describes a dynamic and ever-changing work rhythm, shaped by personal interactions with customers. Her ultimate goal is to individualize the approach to each company she works with. Doing so requires flexibility and creativity.

Dr. Huberty's insights were applicable to anyone considering a transition from academia to industry, yet still wanting to remain in touch with scientific activities. She encourages anyone to follow their unique career path.

She is open to sharing her LinkedIn information and to connecting with AWIS members. Connect with her at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennifer-huberty-phd-8b320066>

AWIS San Diego 2023 Fall Happy Hour

By Agnes Antwan and Shanna Lavalle

The Events Committee organized its first annual Fall Happy Hour for current and prospective members on November 14, 2023. The evening was filled with savory and sweet snacks, festive drinks, and cozy fall vibes. It was a great event, where more than 30 members mingled at the last gathering for 2023. We appreciate greatly Hera Hub for giving us the space to use for our event! Members who are interested in more events like this or in joining a committee should contact the Events Committee at events@awissd.org. Members and guests can look forward to more such interesting events in the future.

When following up with first-time attendee, Ariana Fonseca, about her thoughts on the Happy Hour, she noted the welcoming atmosphere and the ease of networking with people from nearby institutes, many of whom were also first-time attendees.



Special THANK YOU to Hera Hub for giving us the space to use for our event! Members who are interested in more events like this or in joining a committee should contact the Events Committee at events@awissd.org. Check the AWIS-SD calendar for upcoming events!



Chemistry Fun with AWIS-SD at The Annual ChemExpo

By Christine Stephen

Miramar College hosted the annual ChemExpo event on Saturday November 4th, where AWIS-SD Outreach gave a demonstration to teach kids about bioplastics. The event was well attended by local elementary and middle-school students, and about 50 people stopped by the AWIS-SD booth to participate in a fun and hands-on demonstration of how to make edible water pods.

Edible water pods are a small transparent membrane filled with water and pose a sustainable alternative to single-use plastic bottles. The water pods are made by using a seaweed-derived compound that helps the membranes to take shape. This technology was used at the London Marathon in 2019 and prevented the use of 200,000 plastic water bottles!

The students got to make their own batch of water pods and enjoyed watching the pods take shape in a variety of colors and sizes. Not only did attendees learn about the chemistry behind making the water pods, but also learned that materials derived from biological sources can be used to make bioplastics, which readily degrade when they enter the environment.



ChemExpo was a full day event, and AWIS Outreach volunteers did an excellent job delivering this activity to students. In the morning, volunteers Siena Quinn, Angela Snyder, Xingxiu Pan, and Christine Stephen taught the first wave of students how to make the water pods. In the afternoon, volunteers Kina Thackray, Evelyn Thackray, Chloe Welch, and Cindy Wei took over and did a fantastic job engaging the participants. Most attendees did not want to stop after making their first pod, with many making up to 5 or 6 of them!



A big thank you to all of the volunteers mentioned above who made this event such a success. The AWIS-SD Outreach team is looking forward to attending ChemExpo again next year to show the next generation of scientists how chemistry can be useful and make our world a more sustainable place to live!

The world leader in serving science

Educating the next generation of scientists is our investment in the future

Find out more at thermofisher.com

ThermoFisher
SCIENTIFIC

© 2017 Thermo Fisher Scientific Inc. All rights reserved. All trademarks are the property of Thermo Fisher Scientific and its subsidiaries unless otherwise specified. COL31692 0417

Chapter News

We are getting ready to launch our 2024 Scholarship Award Committee. First meeting will occur in December, and award selection will occur in March/April. Since the current Co-Chair is stepping down due to work constraints, we are looking for two AWIS-SD members to step up into a leadership role as well as other members to serve on the committee. Committee responsibilities include updating the academic contacts, application and flier, reviewing applications, selecting the winners.

Please contact vtackray@ucsd.edu if you are interested.

About The Scholarship Program: The AWIS-San Diego Scholarship Program recognizes scholars that support the advancement of women in science, are pursuing degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields at San Diego County colleges and universities and are interested in a career in STEM.

The Scholarship Program, now in its 23rd year, annually supports community college, undergraduate, and graduate students in San Diego County pursuing degrees in STEM fields where women are underrepresented. Scholarship funds help support research projects and/or assist with additional educational expenses. The fields of study of previous AWIS-SD Scholars include biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, engineering, mathematics, and experimental psychology. Each AWIS-SD Scholar receives a \$1000 Scholarship Award.



Discover the BioLegend Difference

Our team is dedicated to accelerating research and discovery with our world-class, cutting-edge reagents. We are committed to excellence in everything we do, including who we hire. If you want to make a difference in a dynamic, friendly, and collaborative environment, we'd love for you to join us. Founded by scientists for scientists, we aren't just making a difference, we are different.

Join our team:
[biologend.com/en-us/careers](https://www.biologend.com/en-us/careers)

BioLegend®

World-Class Quality | Superior Customer Support | Outstanding Value
BioLegend products are manufactured in an ISO 13485:2016 certified facility to ensure the highest quality standards.

Upcoming Events

Check our [website](#) for the most up-to-date information

About the Authors



Agnes Antwan, a native San Diegan, is an Associate Scientist at Crinetics Pharmaceuticals. She received her undergraduate degree in Biology from University of California, Riverside and started her career shortly after in the Psychiatry Department at UCSD. During her time at UCSD, working in both the Consortium for Translational Research in Neuropsychopharmacology (CTRIN) and the Markou Consortium for Neurobiology and Psychopharmacology, she investigated psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia, PTSD, addiction, depression, anxiety, and so on. Agnes transitioned from her career in academia into the industry at Crinetics Pharmaceuticals in 2019, which entails researching and developing therapeutics for rare endocrine diseases and endocrine-related tumors. She joined AWIS-SD in 2022 and began her role as an Events Committee Co-Chair and is currently the Chair of the Events Committee. In her free time, Agnes enjoys trying new restaurants and bars, cooking, and lots of traveling!



Sameera Bilgrami is a member-at-large on the AWIS-SD board, and previously served as the interim president. Sameera is a senior scientist at Aethlon Medical, a company that captures pathological disease targets using medical devices as adjuncts to traditional drug therapies. Her career as a researcher started in India at the National Centre for Biological Sciences, TIFR Bangalore, where she studied protein-lipid interactions in live cell membranes. She was a postdoctoral fellow in the late Dr. Gary Bokoch's lab at Scripps Research before moving to UCSD. Her research focused on organelle movement, angiogenesis, and cancer cell movement. Sameera has a strong background in cell biology and expertise in imaging techniques, image analysis and programming. She likes to spend time with kids, hike, and volunteer at AWIS-SD.



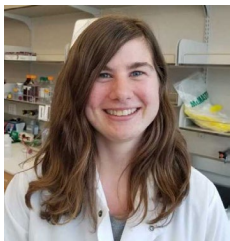
Federica Klaus is an Assistant Project Scientist in the Department of Psychiatry at UC San Diego. She received her MD and PhD from the University of Zurich in Switzerland. Her research focuses on transdiagnostic approach to biological mechanisms of serious mental illness, and how positive psychological traits can increase well-being in people with and without mental illness.



Shanna Lavallo is a postdoctoral fellow at the Salk Institute, where she is using genetic and genomic approaches to identify functional risk variants in autoimmune disorders and cancers. During her PhD studies, she also completed the Rady's School of Management MicroMBA program to enhance her knowledge of business strategy and management. She has since applied these concepts to her leadership roles within the Endocrine Society and the Association for Women in Science (AWIS). Shanna is a former Chair of the Endocrine Society's Summer Research Fellowship program, former Co-Chair of the AWIS-SD Academia to Industry Committee, served on the AWIS National Strategic Planning Task Force, and is currently a board member of the AWIS-SD chapter. Through her commitment to these organizations, Shanna has made a meaningful impact on the professional lives of others and continues to drive growth and development within these organizations to better serve their members.



Jamillah Murtadha grew up in West Virginia, but she has lived in San Diego for seven years. She transferred to UC San Diego as an undergraduate from Southwestern College. She is the first out of ten children to go to graduate school. Currently, she is a Biological Sciences major in the BS/MS program. She enjoys being the Co-chair in the Outreach Department of the Association of Women in Science (AWIS) organization. And she is always striving to seek knowledge outside her field to become a well-rounded scientist. She believes that it is the duty of scientists to communicate the importance of their research with our society.



Christine Stephen is a Sixth- year PhD student in the Chemistry and Biochemistry Department at UC San Diego. She researches bacterial gene expression in the lab and is passionate about the potential of structural biology to expand our knowledge of biological systems. Christine is excited to be co-chair of the AWIS Outreach Committee and looks forward to putting on fun STEM events for the San Diego community.

Contribute to the Newsletter

If you are an AWIS-SD member, we encourage you to contribute to the newsletter. Please send articles, photographs, and member news as MS Word attachments to newsletter@awissd.org. News articles should not exceed 250 words, event summaries should not exceed 500 words, and feature articles (special-interest stories and profiles) should not exceed 1000 words. The submission deadline for the next issue is Feb 15, 2024.

AWIS San Diego Communications Committee - Newsletter

Co-chairs: Corine Lau and Jean Spence

Members: Juliati Rahajeng, Pat Rarus, Chandani Sen, and Elaine Guo

Newsletter@awissd.org

AWIS San Diego Sponsors

AWIS-SD thanks our corporate sponsors for their generous support. Donations from corporate sponsors help us fund scholarship awards, monthly events, career development workshops, community outreach efforts, the newsletter and the website.

For more information about how your company can support AWIS-SD, send email to CorporateSponsorship@awissd.org

Follow us at www.awissd.org

Our Sponsors

PLATINUM



GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



AWIS Fellow

Lynne Friedmann

AWIS-SD Board Members

President	Rose Presby, PhD	president@awissd.org
Past President	Varykina Thackray, PhD	pastpresident@awissd.org
Secretary	Satarupa Bhaduri, PhD	secretary@awissd.org
Treasurer	Cheyenne Camp, PhD	treasurer@awissd.org
Members at Large	Shanna Lavalley, PhD	
Members at Large	Sameera Bilgrami, PhD	