

In July 2009 I attended *Project Atmosphere – Weather Workshop for Teachers*, a program in Kansas City, Missouri, run by the American Meteorological Society, and co-sponsored by NOAA and the National Science Foundation. I spent two weeks with sixteen American teachers, at the National Weather Service's (NWS) training centre, attending workshops and listening to speakers. We covered various atmospheric science topics including El Niño, hurricanes, tornadoes, weather systems, and climate, as well as forecasting with satellites, radar and weather maps. Each day included a weather briefing, guest lectures and activities for teachers and students. Every day, I learned something new; the opportunity to listen to and ask questions of scientists and experts was wonderful. We heard from Dr. Louis W. Uccellini (Director of the NWS's National Centers for Environmental Prediction), Dr. Jack Hayes (Director of NWS), Dr. Joe Schaefer (Director of the NOAA Storm Prediction Center), Eric Blake (Hurricane Specialist from the National Hurricane Center) and many others.

One of the highlights of our time was a field trip to the NWS office in Topeka, Kansas where we met meteorologists and heard about their education, training and job responsibilities; we also watched a balloon launch. Not only was this interesting and educational for me, but it also gave me knowledge to share with my students concerning atmosphere-related careers and opportunities. As a high school science teacher in British Columbia (at Port Moody Secondary School), I can teach my students about the atmosphere in both Science 10 (a required course for all students) and Earth Science 11 (an elective course) and it is important that I can talk to them about their options for their futures.

Apart from learning about atmospheric sciences, I also met and talked with my American counterparts. It is always interesting to hear about different education systems and to make comparisons. Our science curriculum is drastically different from that of most of the States, as British Columbia students take general science courses until grade 11 (each year has some biology, chemistry, earth and space sciences, and physics) whereas in the US each grade covers a different topic (for example, biology in grade 8, Earth Science in grade 9). I also realized how much more atmospheric science I get to teach compared to many teachers in the US. Now I'm wondering about the rest of Canada; as Canadian curricula are provincial, I don't know a lot about what goes on in other provinces. We talked about curriculum, assessment, responsibilities and overall school systems and I think we all learned a lot from each other. Aside from education, I went to a Kansas City Royals baseball game, wandered around much of downtown Kansas City, ate wonderful and saucy barbeque, took a long drive through parts of Missouri and Kansas, and made friends with a wonderful group of teachers.

Thank you for sponsoring me as the Canadian participant in this year's Project Atmosphere Workshop. I am looking forward to sharing my knowledge with my peers and my students this year and throughout my career.

- Aliisa Sarte