

# The ReSET Report

Chief Executive Officer: Harold Sharlin  
Executive Director: John Meagher

## ReSET Core School Partnership Program Keeps Aspirations Buoyant



Cora Kelly Third-Grader Prepares for Balloon Experiment (photo courtesy of R. Mercado)

You have to be grounded to handle 75 third-graders at one time, but then again, the science lesson was on gravity. Juan Valentin and 13 other volunteers from the US Patent & Trademark Office's Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), descended on Cora Kelly elementary school in Alexandria, VA in early October with parachutes, balloons, and a great deal of infectious energy. Juan, who is a mechanical engineer, and his co-leaders Arthur Hall and Ramon Mercado, began their first ReSET session this term by introducing their team and their occupations, which ranged from mechanical and chemical engineers to accountants and even an attorney. This was followed by a brief discussion of words like "invention," "trademark," and "intellectual property." Some of the students' answers were highly original, if not exactly accurate. (One student thought a "patent" was "an animal that you

keep.") From there the discussion moved into gravity, newtons, and surface area & force.

Cora Kelly is the first school to join ReSET's new Core School Partnership initiative, which presents ReSET programs to students at multiple grade levels as they advance through school. The program also seeks to more

closely link volunteers and programs to science standards of learning, and to reach out to parents and guardians. ReSET Executive Director John Meagher explains: "Ultimately, Core School Partnerships will enable ReSET to compare our students' science standardized test scores with those of students who have not experienced ReSET programs. This will provide valuable information on science achievement by ReSET students to supplement our current assessments of student attitudes toward science."

*"Our children rely on ReSET programs to give them a sense of hope and purpose."*  
—Brandon Davis

A couple of years ago, Juan contacted John about the possibility of establishing a ReSET program at Cora Kelly Elementary, which has a high Hispanic enrollment. The two of them then met with Principal

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*"The experiment watching the parachutes fall was great because we got to see weights affecting the speed."*  
—Paris, Cora Kelly student

**ReSET is pleased to announce these new partnerships with Northern Virginia Elementary Schools:**

- Drew, Barrett & Hoffman-Boston (Arlington)
- George P. Mullen (Manassas)

### Welcome New ReSET Volunteers!

- LaSone Barber, Computer Tech
- Yaritza Perez Bermudez, Engineering
- Amelia Greer, Physical Science
- Kurtis Halo, Biotechnology
- Allison Ho, Education/Psychology
- Ramon Mercado, Engineering
- Sari Jayne Palkoff, Medicinal Chemistry
- Sonia Singh, Chemistry
- Harold Smith, Mechanical Engineering
- Peter Sowa, Electrical Engineering
- Rachel Thornton, Petroleum Engineering

### Science Quiz Answer:

*The presence of water on Mars.*



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**This September, *Science* magazine published a special issue on a discovery made by the Curiosity Rover. What was it?**



... See inside for the answer

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*("Core School Program" continued from front)*

Brandon Davis, who was very enthusiastic about the program and decided that the first ReSET sessions would be for third graders. Last June, after some positive feedback, Davis asked if ReSET would provide volunteers for other grade levels. This prompted discussions on the possibility of Cora Kelly becoming a Core school. This year, ReSET will also be delivering programs to first graders, and other grades will be added over time.

Mr. Davis, who has worked in the Fairfax County school system since 1996 and as a Principal at Cora Kelly since 2008, sees ReSET as a positive addition to the school's science and math programs: "The kids really enjoy it and the teachers are glad to see that what the students are learning is being applied authentically, in more practical ways."

Juan Valentin, who seemed not in the least intimidated by so many excited students and characterized the experience as "great fun," thinks the Core School program is an important opportunity for schools to cultivate student interest in STEM. "To follow students from kindergarten through fifth grade, fascinating and engaging them with simple yet enjoyable science and engineering activities, plants a seed of curiosity that hopefully will end with a career in a STEM field."

Juan and his fellow scientists provide something else that is a crucial aspect of ReSET's mission—they serve as role models for minority students who may not get much of a chance to see science professionals in their own communities. Says Davis: "It's always good for children to see people like themselves in successful positions. The media doesn't really show images of minorities excelling in science and math. Seeing average people who are local and live in this area is very motivating to students."

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