‘Dr. Why’ Cultivates Young Chemists

Retired for more than 30 years from his career as a development chemist at Dow Chemical Company, Jim Leenhouts is still active in the field. In addition to acting as a Chemistry Ambassador for ACS, he introduces young scientists to the exciting world of chemistry in his role as a science coach.

Jim and his wife, Marjorie, split their residency between Michigan and Florida. Spending winters in Key Largo, Jim quickly became known as the resident chemist and was asked to consider sharing his time and talents at the Academy at Ocean Reef. Through the ACS Science Coaches Program, Jim was paired with Kristen Baar, the academy’s math and science teacher. For the last few years, Jim and Kristen have worked together to provide a hands-on look at science to students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Continued on Page 2
Beyond Boring

One of Jim’s goals in the classroom is to change students’ perceptions of chemistry and chemists. “Most kids don’t know what chemists do,” Jim explains. “They think chemistry is boring.” While Kristen coordinates the curriculum and develops lesson plans, Jim designs and implements experiments and demonstrations that bring concepts to life for kids. “I put the cherry on top of the sundae,” he says.

“Jim brings his passion for science to us,” Kristen shares. “Students get to experience a real-life scientist and see that there’s more to science than sitting in a lab and mixing chemicals in beakers.”

Whether he’s demonstrating pulley systems, comparing the cleaning power of Scrubbing Bubbles with other solvents or introducing students to the chemistry at work in batteries, Jim constantly challenges students to figure out not just how things work but why. He invites students to investigate and ask questions, earning him the honorary title of Dr. Why. “Jim helps students develop critical thinking and other higher level skills,” Kristen confirms.

The students at Ocean Reef aren’t the only ones who benefit from Jim’s coaching. Kristen believes Jim’s expertise and professional experience enhances her teaching. “He thinks outside the box in ways different than I do,” she says.

Teachers in the ACS Science Coaches Program also receive a $500 grant from the Society that can be used to purchase supplies or provide experiences for students. Kristen plans to use the money to acquire additional lab supplies for the school to increase hands-on activities at every grade level.

Looking to the Future

Jim hopes the enthusiasm for chemistry he brings into the classroom is infectious and will translate into students’ appreciation for chemistry and its role in solving the world’s problems. “I believe that encouraging young people to consider a technical career is very important to the future of this country,” he says.

Jim recognizes that many women aren’t exposed to the sciences like men are at a young age, which is why he is passionate about encouraging women to pursue careers in math and science.
“We’re missing a large portion of potential chemists,” he contends. “They [women] don’t get a good look at the technical side of the world where they could be successful.”

Jim and Marjorie have included ACS in their estate plans, focusing on educational programs and scholarships. They are endowing a scholarship now that will be funded in the future by a charitable remainder trust. The scholarship will be available to women pursuing an education in the chemical sciences. “It’s a great feeling knowing that a young woman can go to school thanks to you,” Jim says.

A Call for Chemistry Coaches

“If everyone reached a few students, think of the difference it could make,” says Jim about the importance of being a science coach.

He and Kristen are one of the 168 teams that were sponsored by the ACS Science Coaches Program last year. Currently, there is a great need for science coaches to be matched with waiting teachers. Coaches are working or retired chemists who partner with an elementary, middle or high school science teacher for at least one year to share their knowledge and skills with students.

If you are interested in helping build the next generation of chemists, please contact sciencecoaches@acs.org or (202) 872-6168. And if you would like more information on how your planned gift can support innovative partnerships like the ACS Science Coaches Program, feel free to contact Mary Bet Dobson at (202) 872-6210 or m_dobson@acs.org.
Look Out for the Tax Bite

Don’t Let Your Assets Be Consumed by Taxes

Did you know that as much as 39.6 percent of your retirement plan assets can be consumed by taxes after your lifetime? That percentage can be even higher if your estate is subject to estate taxes.

The tax bite can take this chunk when you name any individual other than your spouse as beneficiary of your retirement plan assets.

Shield Your Retirement Plan Assets

If you would like your support of the American Chemical Society to continue after your lifetime, consider this tax-saving strategy for your retirement plan: Make a gift of all or a percentage of your retirement plan assets to ACS. Thanks to our tax-exempt status, we can receive these assets without paying any taxes, allowing you to protect your hard-earned dollars from the tax bite.

To provide for your loved ones, you can leave them assets that are not as heavily taxed, such as life insurance and real estate.

Let Us Know

Have you already named ACS as a beneficiary of your retirement plan assets? Let us know by contacting us or returning the enclosed survey. We would appreciate the opportunity to recognize and thank you for your generosity.

FREE Guide!

Learn how to make a big difference with just a little effort by requesting our free guide The 3 Easiest Ways to Leave Your Legacy by returning the enclosed survey.