

Bay Area Chemistry...



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Photo: Kristen McCaleb

PAULA SIMMS

Founder of the Amador Valley High School Science Extravaganza

Chemistry teacher, Amador Valley High School, Pleasanton, Calif.

Has taught students from 1st through 12th grades

Honors Include:
Lloyd Ryland Outstanding High School Teacher Award – 2009

Paula Simms has taught science at every level of elementary, middle, and high school for 19 years. Her philosophy of teaching is that the teacher who can make a connection with her students can teach them almost anything. But Simms also knows people become passionate about a subject when they themselves teach it, which is at the heart of her Amador Valley High School Science Extravaganza.

Each year, about 1,000 elementary school students from the Pleasanton Unified School District join the Amador Valley High chemistry students for two days of intense science experiments and just plain fun! Simms organizes the event in stations that are managed by 600 chemistry students who work with the younger students on highly interactive endeavors. Many are 'make and takes' – projects that the students can bring home with them and

share with their families. All the projects develop the science content found in the K through 5th grade and 9th through 12th grade California State Science Standards.

Simms also teaches her students to look for science in their daily life. "We experience science in some form every day," Simms said. "It is exciting to share that with my students."

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