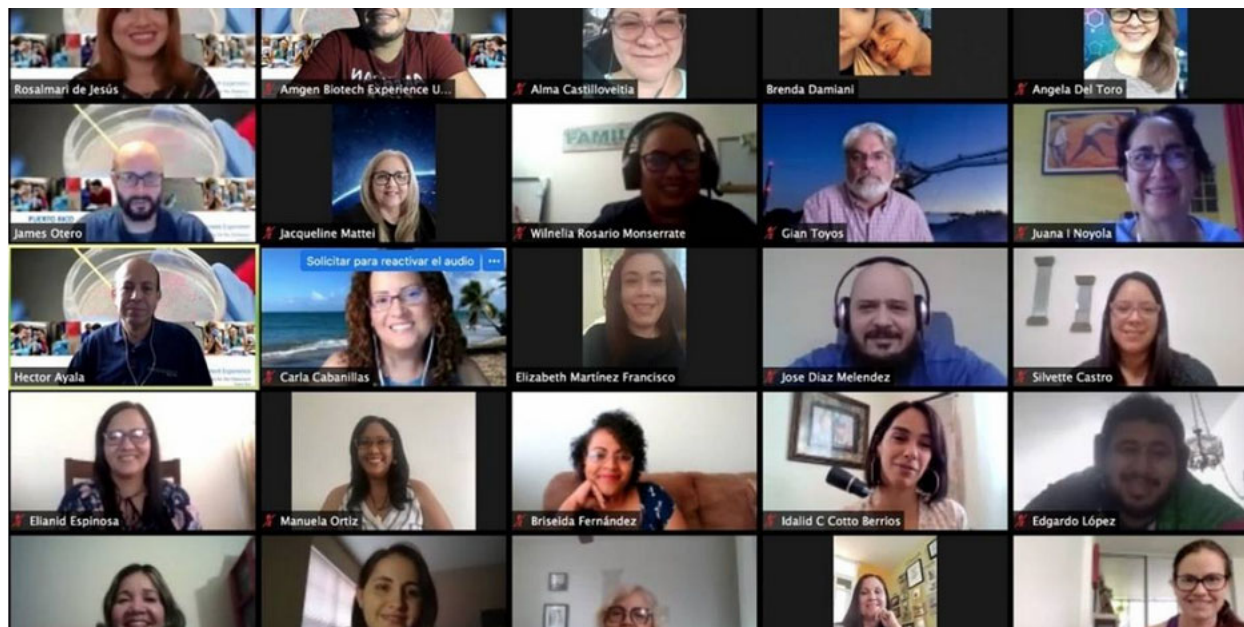


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Recognition of science teachers in Puerto Rico

Laboratory materials and equipment were provided to intermediate and higher level teachers



Some 50 middle and high school science teachers from public and private schools were recently honored in a virtual recognition activity for their great commitment and dedication to science education as part of the innovative Amgen Biotech Experience educational program promoted by the Amgen Foundation on the island.

The educational initiative, which is currently being conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, aims to increase the scientific literacy of teachers and students in the field of biotechnology, provide hands-on experiences based on scientific methods, and promote interest in biotechnology through discovery and critical thinking, and by informing how this scientific discipline impacts the quality of life of teachers and students. The Amgen Biotech Experience program, which began in 2008 in Puerto Rico through an educational partnership between the University of Puerto Rico Humacao and the Amgen Foundation, has impacted more than 600 science teachers and 70,000 students throughout the island.

"In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational experiences of the Amgen Biotech Experience program were transformed to be offered online using the LabXchange technology tool, where science teachers virtually provide their students with the opportunity to conduct experiments in an environment that simulates a real laboratory setting. This experience prepares students in the field of biotechnology and helps them to have a solid academic background to pursue studies in the STEM sciences. We congratulate and recognize the commitment and dedication of all the teachers who participated in the cycle of workshops

*under the Amgen Biotech Experience program in an atypical year of great educational challenges," said **Dr. Héctor Ayala del Río, director of Amgen Biotech Experience in Puerto Rico.***

As part of the initiative, the program provides laboratory materials and equipment to middle and high school science teachers to create or enrich a biotechnology laboratory curriculum from the comfort of their homes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, they can explore the scientific methods used in the field of biomanufacturing to inspire and introduce students to the world of STEM sciences.

It should be noted that in the virtual training sessions, participating science teachers obtain a professional development opportunity and also learn the technical skills and theoretical basis of molecular biology through an interactive curriculum that stimulates students' interest. They also gain an in-depth knowledge of the primary tools or instruments used in the field of biotechnology and become familiar with the processes and techniques in this discipline of science.

***Briseida Fernandez, science teacher at Fajardo Academy,** emphasized that, "I am very proud of the Amgen Biotech Experience program and the resources it provides to teachers to make the educational experience more interesting and dynamic. The students enjoy the labs while developing scientific research skills and gaining hands-on experience doing science."*

***Aixa Caballer, leader of the Amgen Foundation in Puerto Rico and Amgen's Senior Manager of Corporate Affairs,** said, "Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the speed of education on school campuses, at the Amgen Foundation we are looking for innovative ways to continue providing the necessary tools and resources for the benefit of teachers and students in Puerto Rico. Through the Amgen Biotech Experience program, we have reformulated the educational strategy in a virtual way, to make available to the Academy all the resources and talents available to the Amgen Foundation to further contribute to the development and growth of middle and high school science teachers interested in being educated in the field of biotechnology and that results in an educational benefit for all students in Puerto Rico."*

The executive added that the Amgen Foundation recognizes the commitment and interest of science teachers to exalt and elevate scientific knowledge in the area of biotechnology for the benefit of all students interested in STEM sciences. In addition, they are proud of the impact that the Amgen Biotech Experience virtual program has had on the lives of science teachers participating in the educational program in Puerto Rico.

*On the other hand, **Cesar M. Lopez Santos, science teacher and academic director of Job Connection Center of San Juan,** mentioned that, "I am an educator of socioeconomically challenged students and the participation in the Amgen Biotech Experience program represents a unique educational improvement opportunity for all our students."*