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[Emily Schoerning](#) [1]

05.01.2017

## [Booster Clubs: Coast to Coast Update](#) [6]

Three months ago, NCSE launched a [national expansion](#) [7] of our Science Booster Club (SBC) program. Many of the new clubs have already started holding events, and more are scheduled through the spring and summer. We estimate that in just the first three months of operation, around 3,000 people have participated in SBC events held by volunteer-led clubs in California, West Virginia, Ohio, Texas, Nebraska, and Indiana. Events are also scheduled in Kentucky, Virginia, and Oklahoma. Meanwhile, the SBC program continues to thrive in Iowa, where clubs have already worked with nearly 20,000 people in 2017. Here are some highlights:

### INDIANA

Tara Schremser is using her community connections to provide weekly programming in Indiana at farmers' markets starting in late May. She's been practicing and developing her presentation skills by using SBC materials to teach kids about climate change at her local middle school. Schremser, the mother of three young children, has business experience and is passionate about science education, but has never done this kind of outreach before. We are grateful for her support! She is a great example of

how one person who cares about a cause can get the ball rolling in their community.

## OHIO and WEST VIRGINIA

Throughout the Ohio River Valley, the Ohio River Valley Climate Action Group has been presenting SBC materials at middle schools, high schools, and city councils across the region, reaching many hundreds of people at seven separate events. This passionate group of volunteers, who we work with through our contact person, Eric Engle, is composed mostly of retirees. Their goal? To make their region, which is in the throes of the opiate epidemic, a place where their grandchildren will thrive. We are so lucky to work with this committed, deeply involved group of community activists.

## NEBRASKA and KENTUCKY

Farmers' markets are a popular venue for upcoming events at the SBC expansion sites, with our volunteer teams led by Anna Selmecki of Creighton University in Nebraska and Ribhu Kaul of the University of Kentucky. Both target both day and night market events with their graduate students. By working with young families in the day and adults at night, these teams will gather information on how to best tailor content to these different audiences—and how to best recruit volunteers.

## CALIFORNIA

In California, Carlina Potthast has taught over five hundred people about climate change from her home base at San Jose State University. Potthast, an undergraduate, is a nontraditional student. She owned her own business for years, and recently made the decision to go to college. She is interested in science communication, and wants to learn how to teach people about climate change. In her first few months volunteering with NCSE, she has definitely shown herself up to the task!

## VIRGINIA

Our new clubs are also at work in public libraries. Rob Marken Jr. is leading our efforts in Virginia, where he has just worked out an arrangement to provide regular, advertised programming! Public libraries have been great partners in Iowa, and we're glad to see more SBCs connecting with the library community.

Our volunteer leaders are doing amazing work getting off the ground in their communities. And our SBC sites supported by NCSE staff are going like gangbusters.

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

NCSE's Claire Adrian-Tucci is building a strong, diverse SBC over on the east coast. She has events on the calendar serving underprivileged students in the DC metropolitan area, and is participating in an upcoming event on the White House lawn. Her events on the calendar for early 2017 are also reaching into five-figure audiences, and will give us important new perspectives on work in urban areas. We have feet on the ground in all sorts of places, but only Adrian-Tucci is working in a dense urban area. We value her experience and insights as she charts the benefits and challenges of this new territory!

## IOWA

Brian Pinney, of Des Moines, Iowa, joined the NCSE staff in January to support our Iowa expansion project. In this short time, he's already booked to work with over ten thousand people in central Iowa! He's adding more events all the time, from the Des Moines Climate March on April 29, 2017, to county fairs

across the region throughout June and July.

Our volunteers in Iowa City continue to provide programming across eastern Iowa. They've participated in at least one major event every month this year. In the month of April alone they had ten community outreach events on the schedule, with audiences large and small, at public schools, libraries, and major festivals. Since the beginning of the year, they have worked with almost twenty thousand Iowans. Their hard work has recently attracted the attention of Iowa's Department of Natural Resources. Our club, after two years of service in Eastern Iowa, has been asked to apply for state-level funding for our outreach on climate change.

Looking back on the first season of the SBC program's national expansion, I'm so proud of our many leaders and many volunteers' determination, growth, and success. Working together, we will reach so many of our fellow Americans in 2017. As our networks expand, and as the weather gets nicer, we'll be outside working with even more people in late spring and early summer events.

We're also due to send new materials to our expansion leaders. Our first kit focused on climate change. Our next kit, developed in response to the creationist exhibit at the 2016 Iowa State fair, helps counter common misconceptions by teaching genetics in the context of evolutionary theory. Sounds complicated, right? Don't worry. Our "Genetics and Evolution" kit has been extensively field tested here in Iowa, and is popular and accessible to general audiences. How could it not be, when people get to learn about selection and drift through preying on innocent candy populations?

I'll update you again soon! If you want to get in touch with me about the SBC program, email me at [schoerning@ncse.com](mailto:schoerning@ncse.com). And if you want to [support us](#) [8], ten bucks from you equals a hundred people on the ground for us.

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