In May, 2018 the Little Shop of Physics (LSOP) teamed up with the Colorado State University Native American Cultural Center (NACC) for a three-day trip to the Native American pueblo areas near Santa Fe.

Our visits to Native American reservation areas help to build relationships with these communities; we’ve been visiting pueblos and schools in and around Santa Fe for a few years now. The week before our visit, some students from Santa Fe Indian School (where we had visited the previous year) had an unfortunate encounter while touring Colorado State. Our return visit to this area was a tangible sign of Colorado State’s commitment to Native American students and communities, which made the timing of this particular visit very fortuitous. The ongoing nature of the commitment, the fact that we’ve visited before, the fact that we’ll be back again, the fact that we provide, as part of our visit, information about college and careers, the fact that we provide concrete details of a pathway to college and careers, was a perfect reminder of the commitment to Native communities that Colorado State, with the generous support of Halliburton, continues to honor.

During this year’s three day visit, over 1,500 K-12 students at Cochiti and Bernalillo school had the opportunity to explore our 100+ hands-on science experiments, assisted by staff and students from LSOP and NACC. The investigation continued after our visit; each student received a Halliburton Science-at-Home Kit that included a pair of branded 3D glasses, a UV color change bracelet, a pair of buzzing magnets, and other items for at-home investigation. During the informal interactions with Colorado State students and staff, students were reminded of the excitement and the rewards that study and careers in STEM fields can provide. We shared practical information, details of scholarships, details of careers including oil and gas, with the teachers and staff at the schools, to share with students and parents.

More than one teacher remarked to us how much they appreciated the visit, how they appreciated the relationship, how they hoped we’d return, and brought out the possibility of workshops for teachers and family nights. This is exactly the outcome we’d hoped for. We are building relationships, building trust, that will allow us to have greater impact in future years.

The visit, the materials students received, and this important ongoing partnership, were made possible by a generous grant from the Halliburton Foundation.