

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

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Alexandria, VA — The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) and the Education Development Center's Oceans of Data Institute (ODI) have purchased over 400 Awesome Aquifer Kits to donate to schools in Maryland and Virginia. The kits, which are produced by the Groundwater Foundation (GF), are a one-of-a-kind educational tool that provides fun and hands-on investigations to help students understand and get excited about groundwater science.

In connection with a National Science Foundation-funded research project, AGI and ODI are working with three schools in Maryland and Virginia that will receive the donated kits to use in their elementary science classes. Kits will be made available to be sent home with children who are learning remotely due to restrictions from COVID-19.

In addition to increasing students' groundwater awareness, the effort could help build educators' understanding of effective ways of developing students' data literacy skills. Data literacy skills help people think about how data is collected, interpreted, and communicated in meaningful ways.

"Water science education is an essential part of students' learning about the natural systems that affect each of us every day," says AGI Education and Outreach Director Ed Robeck. "As schools are finding that they need to innovate more than ever to meet student needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, this project shows how we can work together to provide high-quality, hands-on science education even in virtual learning situations."

The Groundwater Foundation, which is operated by the National Ground Water Association, developed Awesome Aquifer Kits as an accessible and fun way to educate students on groundwater science and to inspire the next generation of groundwater professionals. The growing concern of emerging contaminants such as PFAS and PFOA chemicals has brought an increased interest in the needs to educate students on the role scientist and engineers play in maintaining clean and safe water supplies.

"AGI has a great history of educating and inspiring students to get involved in the sciences and we are thrilled with their work to get these kits into classrooms," said National Ground Water Association CEO Terry S. Morse, CAE CIC. "We believe the Awesome Aquifer Kits will help educate our youth on the importance of proper groundwater management so that it can be protected and sustained for future generations"

About AGI

The American Geosciences Institute (AGI), a federation of scientific and professional associations representing over a quarter-million geoscientists, is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to serving the geoscience community and addressing the needs of society. AGI headquarters are in Alexandria, Virginia. Learn more at www.americangeosciences.org.

About GF

The Groundwater Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lincoln, Nebraska with a mission to connect people, businesses, and communities through local groundwater education and action, making us all part of the solution for clean, sustainable groundwater. Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has offered various education and action opportunities for youth and adults. To learn more, visit www.groundwater.org.

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