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Saklan science teacher on the move

Submitted by Christine Kuckuk



Saklan science teacher Victoria Obenchain Photo provided

Victoria Obenchain, a longtime science teacher at The Saklan School in Moraga, was selected last fall from over 400 applicants for the 2017-18 Teachers for Global Classrooms Fellowship funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and implemented by IREX, an international nonprofit organization. After completing a graduate level course on global education, she was placed in Senegal where she visited cultural sights and taught in their classrooms for two weeks, from April 16 to May 2.

Obenchain's experience with TGC was an enhancement to Saklan's already rich program of global education. The TGC program is based on four key components: investigate the world; recognize multiple perspectives; communicate ideas; and take action. In the short term the program seeks to implement more Global Education opportunities for students and in the long term to effect systematic change on a global plane for the betterment of mankind.

She is on the move again this summer, having set sail June 25 on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ship Fairweather for an Alaska Research Cruise to assist scientists on a 12-day hydrographic survey in northwest Alaska, along the coast of the Chukchi Sea. The cruise is part of NOAA's Teacher at Sea program, which bridges science and education through real-world research experiences. Obenchain was one of 35 teachers selected from nearly 300 applicants.

"Through my experience with NOAA, my students will not only be able to learn first-hand about exciting research projects at sea, they will be witnesses to them, and on some level, participants in them," says Obenchain. "Making their learning relevant through my own hands-on experiences is vital to getting students excited about science."

In addition to these professional development programs, Obenchain also leads the annual seventh-grade trip to Hawaii to study evolution, adaptation and culture. During Spring Break she also led an EF Tour group of 15 students to Iceland to study the geothermal wonders and sub-arctic fauna.

For more information about the Teachers for Global Classrooms Program, visit <http://ECA-Press@state.gov>.

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