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CHAMPIONS® SCIENCE ADVENTURES® BRINGS SCIENCE TO CHILDREN'S FINGERTIPS WITH LAUNCH OF VIRTUAL SCIENCE CLUB

New Online Learning Program Offers Fun, Flexible Modules That Meet and Exceed National and State Science Standards

Denver, Colo. – April 20, 2010 – Today, Champions® Science Adventures® (www.discoverchampions.com) announced the availability of its newest science education program: the Virtual Science Club, an interactive web-based program which focuses on the exciting world of science. The club allows students in grades 3-7 to experiment in a virtual laboratory with “Gizmo the Gecko,” complete interactive activities, solve clues and puzzles and get introduced to valuable science concepts. The flexible program is designed so students can participate in the club at home, at school or anywhere they have access to a computer and the Internet.

“Champions has been designing and administering education programs for nearly 30 years and we’re always looking for new and relevant ways to engage kids in science learning,” said Pete Cassidy, director of online programs. “A national spotlight is being placed on science education, as evidenced by President Obama’s national science and math ‘Educate to Innovate’ campaign. Now more than ever, student achievement is being tied to our country’s ability to compete globally in the future. To be successful, we have to approach science education differently. With the Virtual Science Club, we created a game-based resource that is flexible and comprehensive to provide the science learning children need, while making the experience fun.”

The Virtual Science Club is available to school districts and homeschoolers nationwide, as well as directly to parents. For school districts, administration of the club can be customized to meet individual classroom or school needs. "Students can login for one hour increments, and complete the full club in five weeks, or in one. The program is built to be flexible based upon how an educator wants to structure their program," explains Cassidy.

Champions has designed the program to feature individual "clubs," or themed grouping of lessons, which are created from Champions' research-based curriculum that meets and exceeds state and national science standards. With additional plans for other clubs, the first club available is entitled "Mystery of the Pharaoh's Treasure." To enroll, children log-on to a child-friendly portal where each student completes a quick pretest to accurately gauge skill sets. Each student then creates a customized avatar, using the mascot of Science Adventures, Gizmo the Gecko. They can then explore a virtual laboratory, "transport" Gizmo off to different locations in Egypt, and decipher puzzles to ultimately allow Gizmo to move forward through five stages of an adventure. Students are immersed in numerous scientific fields ranging from biological to physical sciences throughout these five stages, which include:

- **Entry to Egypt:** Lesson #1 introduces archeology and Egyptian history, where users must use clues to unravel a message written in Egyptian hieroglyphics.
- **Acids & Bases:** Students test water samples to explore chemical components of acids and bases, forming hypothesis to help them put Gizmo on the path toward the Pharaoh's treasure.
- **Secrets of the Sand:** Children make microscopic and chemical observations of different types of sand as they continue the search for the lost treasure.
- **A Star Will Rise:** Students learn to identify constellations and follow a map to further direct them to the treasure's secret location.
- **The Pharaoh's Treasure:** The final lesson calls for Club scientists to examine part of the fabulous treasure left by Pharaoh Gizmotep and discover the history of the forgotten dynasty of Pharaohs.

At the conclusion of the last chapter, each student then completes a post-test to measure behavioral gains.

To assist students during the program, qualified instructors from across the nation help personalize the experience for each child. Supplemental “kitchen science” video lessons are available after each chapter to introduce optional hands-on science activities to try at home.

A select group of instructors participated in the initial launch of the Virtual Science Club. “As a teacher, I appreciate how Champions has tied science and history together in the ancient Egypt module,” said Chris Mueller, 6th grade teacher, in Arlington, Texas. “There was a lesson in history for each lesson on science... hieroglyphics and testing for acids, bases and neutrals. The program offers an alternate teaching model that supports curriculum and allows teachers to reach every child regardless of his/her learning style. My students loved the online science experiments and the ability to ‘chat’ with other students through the discussion board.”

The Virtual Science Club is available to school districts for an average cost of \$80 per child for more than 5 hours of virtual instruction. Individual club memberships are available to parents as well for \$80 per club. For more information about The Virtual Science Club visit www.discoverchampions.com or call 800-246-2154.

About Champions® Science Adventures®

Champions Science Adventures is one of the nation's longest-running and largest science enrichment programs for K-6 students. Its comprehensive programs use trained science educators who foster children's curiosity about science and motivate them to continue to expand this interest throughout their education. Students can participate in Champions Science Adventures programs throughout the school year, in after-school science clubs conveniently located on-site, right in their own schools. They can also continue the science fun and learning even when school lets out for the summer, with Science Adventures summer camps based in their communities.

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