

## Mobile Laboratory Coalition Conference

This year the annual Mobile Laboratory Coalition Conference was held in Columbus Ohio July 12-15. There aren't any member programs in Columbus, so why hold the conference there? Columbus is home to Farber Specialty Vehicles, the company that built the Science Adventure Lab as well as several of the labs for other programs. Holding the conference in Columbus allowed conference attendees to spend an afternoon at the Farber plant. Tours were offered so that we could see vehicles in various stages of



construction, as well as view several completed mobile labs. There was also a workshop on designing mobile labs onboard the new 53 foot MdBio trailer that was hosted by Triune Trailers. Spending the afternoon at Farber was an excellent opportunity for members of both new and established programs to learn about recent advances in building mobile labs



and strategies for optimizing student learning. There was also time to socialize as Farber generously sponsored a BBQ dinner with entertainment by a local band.

The conference was co-hosted by Seattle Children's Research Institute and MdBio Foundation from Maryland. The Science Education team played a key role in the success of the 2016 conference. Lizette did an excellent job coordinating the conference logistics and Dr. Jones was responsible for creating an engaging agenda with speakers who are thought leaders in research and education. Plenary speakers included Dr. Jan Weisenberger and Dr. Laura Wagner from Ohio State University, Dr. Joe Heimlich and Rita Deedrick from COSI - Columbus's award winning science museum and research center, Stacy Glatz from the Columbus Zoo and Thomie Timmons from the Reynoldsburg School District FabLab program.

An important part of the conference is the opportunity to share best practices, data, and curriculum. To that end, two of our team members presented at the conference. Billy Roden was one of 18 attendees who gave poster



presentations. He presented outcomes data for the Science Adventure Lab program. There were also 13 workshops including one by Becky Carter on "Optimizing Partnerships with Classroom Teachers." Both Billy and Becky did a great job representing Seattle Children's Research Institute and the Science Education team.

The annual conference is an important source of professional development for all of the Science Education Team members, and we are already looking forward to next year.

—Amanda Jones, PhD