



Showcasing talented Laboratory employees

May 8, 2017

Edward Jacquez grew up in El Rancho, a rural community about 20 miles north of Santa Fe. His father, Benito, had been an avid street racer in his youth, but as he matured, he realized he needed a safer place to practice his sport, so he started traveling to the Albuquerque Dragway. He began to move up in racing classes, competing in cars with modified engines that could reach adrenaline-pumping speed. At age 15, Jacquez began to take over the driving duties while his father focused more on the mechanics of the cars they raced.

“I grew up in the garage and at the dragway working with my father, who taught me the concepts of engineering through the sport of drag racing,” says Jacquez. “We pretty much share the grease that gets on our hands.”

“Today, I teach those same engineering concepts to my 10-year-old daughter, Hailee, and my three-year-old son, Ollie,” Jacquez elaborates. “My wife is fascinated by the level of understanding my daughter has of mechanics, as she spends countless hours with me in the shop. It’s also not uncommon for me to find a Hot Wheel lodged in my car’s header during startup, courtesy of Ollie. It takes a tremendous amount of time to keep a car of this caliber operational, and I’m eternally grateful for the support I get from my spectacular wife, Claire, and my loving parents, Benito and Carla.”

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From intern to mentor at the Lab

Jacquez has a long history at the Lab where he is now a deputy group leader. He started at LANL’s Dual Axis Radiographic Hydrodynamic Test Facility (DARHT) in 1998 as part of the Electro-Mechanical Technology Student Training Program. This two-year training program encouraged students to continue their education and keep working at the Lab. “I ended this internship with an excellent understanding of the facility’s programmatic operations,” he adds.

As he worked his way up through the ranks as an electrical-mechanical technician at the Lab, he completed an undergraduate degree in computer science, and became a controls engineer, and now finally a deputy group leader. During his 18-year career, Jacquez has been a Lab mentor to 12 students, many of whom have moved into professional careers at LANL or other technical institutions.

Jacquez valued the opportunities he was given and now gives to others through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program in Los Alamos. “I’ve introduced my ‘little brother’ to the sciences and arts through activities ranging from robotics, rockets, and artistic murals, and in 2014, I was selected as the Los Alamos County School-based Big of the Year.”

Basics of drag racing

The end goal of a basic drag race is simple: be the first to cross the finish line. Set on a race track typically one-quarter mile long, two cars wait until an electronic system of lights known as a Christmas tree signals *go*, at which point tires roar against the asphalt, the sweet smell of high-octane gasoline fills the air, and fans in the stands cheer as the dragsters battle for a win that takes only seconds.

[Read a longer version of the story here.](#)

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