

I was so excited to finally get to go on the STARS cruise. The opportunity seemed like it would be amazing, and I especially looked forward to learning more about why people do the kinds of tests and experiments that they do on ocean research vessels. I eagerly planned and waited for my flight to Honolulu to begin my adventure.



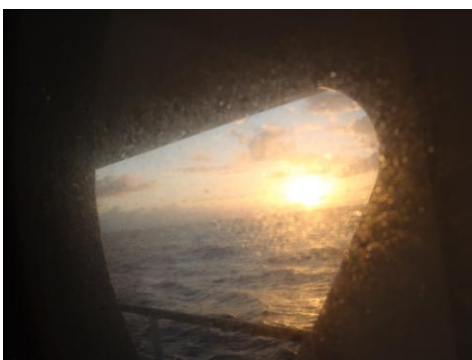
**Nerves calmed, ready to roll!**

Inexplicably I was nervous as my family took me to the airport. I had butterflies in my stomach, my palms were sweaty, and I couldn't seem to stop being anxious. I'm not afraid of boats or airplanes, I love meeting new people, and I'm deeply curious about ocean science. Why was I so nervous?!

Because we live on neighbor islands, some of us had to fly in the night before our adventure to make sure we got on the ship on time the next morning. Our coordinator, Kim

Weersing, met us at the airport and dropped us off at our lodging. She made us feel comfy and welcome, and promised to be back early the next morning to take us to the ship. Her great attitude set the tone for our upcoming voyage.

As soon as I got on board the ship, my nerves were calmed. Everyone was so welcoming and helpful, things were planned very well, and instructions and procedures were very clear. We all pitched in and helped carry things on board. Before we knew it, we were underway, cruising out of Honolulu Harbor.



**The view from our porthole**

The weather for most of the trip was beautiful. We were treated to some high seas on our first night out, which I surprised myself by enjoying thoroughly! Motion sickness medicine was used by many, and proved to be really effective in my case. I maintained a steady dose for the first couple of days until I was sure I had my "sea legs" firmly under me. I strongly recommend using motion sickness medicine from the beginning, just to ensure things go well 😊.

Our days were filled with well-planned, well-prepared activities which were led by two incredible guides, Kim and Jim. My hopes of coming to a deeper understanding of why scientists conduct certain tests (like salinity, conductivity, etc.) were greatly surpassed. We got to use “real-life” equipment and work with scientists who are conducting real-world projects. I have found that I have so much more background knowledge when I am working with my students, and I can more clearly explain WHY they should care about what they are learning.



**Conducting experiments in the lab**



**Deep in thought...deep in adventure...  
up to our chins in fun 😊**

Our team of educators and guides bonded quickly and firmly, and we had a wonderful time! I benefited so much from the discussions and work sessions we had, and I am using the sources and references we were given in my classroom. The camaraderie we felt on board has carried over into our everyday lives, and the connections I made while on the STARS cruise are still going strong. I cannot recommend the STARS experience enough. I'm still not sure why I was so nervous as I was going

to the airport. I can say, though, that this adventure far exceeded my expectations and enriched me immeasurably as a teacher.

In closing, I send out a great big mahalo to Kim and Jim who facilitated our experience, the captain and crew who were so welcoming, and my STARS teacher buddies, who made the days fly past with fun and learning. I also send out a huge mahalo to the C-MORE organization for supporting teachers in gaining real-world experience that we can bring back to our kids. Look for my students on one of your future voyages!

