

Featured Chemist: Mr. Abimael "Maelo" Cordova
Mattel, Inc., El Segundo, CA

In the spirit of the National Chemistry Week theme, "The Joy of Toys," this trip was to visit my new friend, Mr. Abimael "Maelo" Cordova, in the chemistry lab at Mattel, Inc. Mr. Cordova is a toy chemist! He mixes chemicals together to make new elastic and rubbery materials that can be used in toys. He tries different recipes, or "formulas" to make the products and experiments with ways of making them to see what works best. It's almost like cooking!

Mr. Cordova also makes plastics, inks, "gooey" compounds (like slime), gels, glues and paints. He makes sure the products work well and that they are safe for children. I was so excited

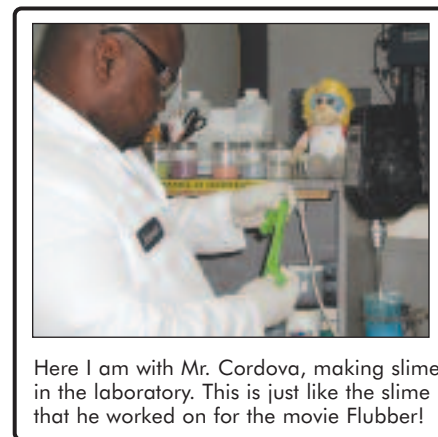


Here I am pictured with Mr. Cordova, a toy chemist! Mr. Cordova thinks the best thing about being a scientist is that you learn how things work and you also get paid for what you enjoy doing!

to see Mr. Cordova also wears protective safety glasses like I do! He wears a white lab coat and gloves to keep him safe while he is working in his laboratory.

Before I went to work with Mr. Cordova, I asked him about how he became interested in chemistry. He told me he has "always been curious about how things work". When he was in elementary school he did experiments around the house. Some of the experiments he did included making slime, creating a volcano with baking soda and vinegar, and swirling food coloring in milk. He was always very careful, wore his protective safety goggles and had a parent help him with his experiments. His parents were very supportive and enjoyed watching him do his experiments. At school, his teachers were also very encouraging and gave him extra experiments to do for extra credit! He decided to be a chemist in high school after winning first place in a National Chemistry Fair in Puerto Rico.

The next morning Mr. Cordova took me to his laboratory at Mattel, Inc. where I met other chemists. The first experiment we did together was to make slime! He can make some of



Here I am with Mr. Cordova, making slime in the laboratory. This is just like the slime that he worked on for the movie Flubber!

the stretchiest, gooiest green slime I've ever seen! He told me he also worked on the slime for the movie Flubber and the slime for Hot Wheels track sets! To learn how to make your own slime, visit:
http://center.acs.org/celebrate_chemistry/cc_glitter_slime.pdf

We had a lot of fun seeing how far the slime would stretch! Mr. Cordova works all the time trying to create new elastic and rubbery compounds that can be used in toys! Right now in his laboratory, the chemists are working on a new kind of compound that can



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be part of a toy in another movie! Mr. Cordova told me he really likes the fact that he can "play with toys while making them in the lab". He thinks it makes his job "fun and less stressful". He also likes the safe environment that his job provides.

While in the lab, Mr. Cordova showed me a type of blender that is used to mix chemicals together to make ink for markers! The special markers are called "dry erase" markers. They are used to write on white boards and the writing wipes right off! It is very important to mix the chemicals correctly so the ink won't damage the boards. We made inks in blue, orange, yellow and green!



Here Mr. Cordova is showing me how he mixes chemicals together to make ink for dry erase markers! Look at the different colors we made!

Mr. Cordova also does research in his office using his computer. He reads to learn things that can help him create new products and make other toys

better! Mr. Cordova likes how all of his work makes the children want to create and discover new things. He says any time a child plays with a Mattel toy that has a marker, slime or paint, that he probably worked on making it in his laboratory!

If you have any questions about my visit, you can write to me at meg@acs.org.

**Personal Profile:
Mr. Maelo Cordova**

What is your favorite food?
Puerto Rican food

What is your favorite color?
Blue, red, white and beige

What is your favorite movie?
The Nutty Professor and science fiction movies

When is your birthday?
September 30th—born in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

What is your favorite pastime?
Music, baseball, basketball and reading

What is an accomplishment you are proud of?
Two major accomplishments in school: First Place Award at the National Chemistry Fair in Puerto Rico and First Place award as a National Science Foundation Researcher in Chemistry in California, representing the University of California, Los Angeles.

Can you tell me a little about your family?

I am the oldest of three children. I have a younger brother who works as a criminologist in Puerto Rico and a younger sister who is a registered accountant here in California. Both of my parents are retired after working for the government for over 40 years. My dad was a criminologist and a civil engineer for the US government and my mom was an educator in Puerto Rico. Both are very kind and loving parents.

