

day in the life: debbie harris

Whether climbing trees with her eight-year-old son Isaac, trying to put a dress on her four-year-old daughter Sonia, or running tests on the MINOS neutrino beam line, Debbie Harris is a problem solver and her mind is always busy. "It's really hard to be a parent," she says. Harder than being a particle physicist? "Much."

Harris is a scientist at Fermilab. Besides her job and family, Debbie plays a round-backed mandolin that her grandfather taught her to play. "I feel a strong connection to my grandfather whenever I play the mandolin." Her big vacation every year is to the Strawberry Music Festival near Yosemite National Park in California where she plays impromptu jam sessions. "It's my spa treatment," she says with a laugh.

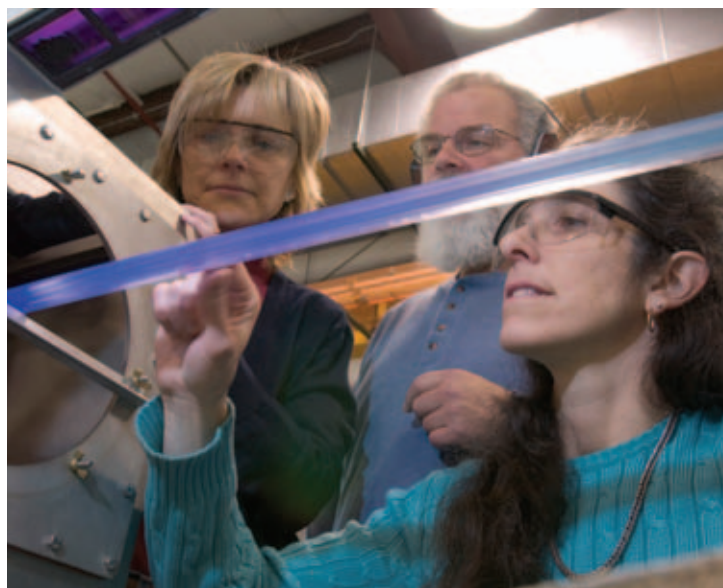


"Today I tried to get my daughter into a dress. She certainly wasn't going to listen to anything I had to say. And I'm just sitting there trying to figure something out. That doesn't happen in physics."

Text: Eric Bland
Photos: Reidar Hahn, Fermilab



"I was relieved for, like, one second when the neutrino beam line [at Fermilab] came on. Then I thought, 'There is so much more to do.'"



Debbie Harris writes about her life as a physicist for *Quantum Diaries* at blogs.quantumdiaries.org/10/