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The AAVSO's program: creating inclusive citizen science communities

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The American Association of Variable Star Observers was formed in 1911 as a group of US-based amateur observers obtaining data in support of professional astronomy projects. Now, it has evolved into an International Association with members and observers from both the professional and non-professional astronomical community, actively supporting ground and space-based variable star projects. As such, the AAVSO's main claim to fame is that it successfully engages backyard Astronomers, educators, students and professional astronomers in astronomical research, building inclusive international communities around its portfolio. I will present the main aspects of the association and how it has evolved with time to become a premium resource for variable star researchers. I will also discuss the various means that the AAVSO is using to support cutting-edge research, and give updates on the tools and resources that are now available to researchers worldwide.