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## American Society of Human Genetics and Applied Biosystems DNA Day essay contest

### *ASHG announces DNA Day essay contest winners*

FOSTER CITY, Calif. – April 25, 2007 – The American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), the Genetics Society of America (GSA) and Applied Biosystems (NYSE:ABI), an Applera Corporation business, are commemorating the fifth annual National DNA Day with activities aimed at reinforcing the value of genetic science education and driving awareness of important biomedical research accomplished since the mapping of the human genome. Recognizing National DNA Day is an opportunity for students, teachers and the public to learn more about genetics and genomics, and was created to recognize both the discovery of the structure of DNA and the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003.

During the month of April, DNA Day ambassadors from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) and partner organizations, such as the ASHG, made presentations in high schools around the country to talk about the value of genetic science.

For the past two years, ASHG has teamed with GSA and Applied Biosystems to invite high school students on a global level to submit written essays on one of two questions: (1) If you could be a human genetics researcher, what would you study and why?, and (2) In what ways will knowledge of genetics and genomics make changes to health and healthcare in the U.S. possible?

Essays were submitted, representing candidates from six countries and 41 states, and were judged on the basis of critical thinking, scientific accuracy, creativity and organization by ASHG and GSA members. Lindsay Michalski, a junior from Athens High School in Troy, Michigan won first place answering what she would study if she were a genetics researcher by addressing the promise of pharmacogenomics from her personal perspective of living with a father who is bipolar, a condition where extreme mood swings occur often and without warning. According to Michalski, pharmacogenomic research that could detect genetic variations among bipolar patients has the potential to provide boundless opportunities for advancement of treatment options for people afflicted by the multifaceted condition.

ASHG and GSA judges awarded Elena Perry, a freshman from Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville, Maryland first place for her thoughts about how knowledge of genetics and genomics will affect future healthcare. Perry's essay addressed how DNA testing could possibly determine whether she will be affected by her father's defective Factor V Leiden gene, which would predispose her to forming clots in her blood vessels. She noted, however, that tests have yet to be developed for many genetic conditions, and that increased knowledge of genetics and genomics will enable a shift to proactive health care that is predictive, preventative and personalized.

As part of Applied Biosystems' sponsorship, Michalski and Perry will each receive \$350, and their teachers will be awarded \$2,000 each to purchase scientific equipment to help sustain the genetics program in their classrooms. The second and third place winners for the first question were Margaret Dietrich, from East

Kentwood High School in Kentwood, Michigan, and Jason Choi from Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Springs, Maryland. The second and third place winners for the second question were Sumit Malik from the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Virginia, and Nathan Whitmore from Ralph Waldo Emerson Junior High in Davis, California. Second and third place essay winners will each receive \$250 and \$150, respectively. Complete essays from each winner are posted at [www.GenEdNet.org](http://www.GenEdNet.org).

This year, Applied Biosystems supported an extension of last year's essay contest by funding up to five internships during the summer of 2007. Eligible students interested in a 10-week program in a human genetics laboratory will be paired with an ASHG member to identify a mentor responsible for the day-to-day aspects of the internship program.

"We received hundreds of essays in response to our essay contest, many of which indicated that students gave serious thought to how genetic science will affect their future and our society as a whole," said Kenna Shaw, Director of Education at ASHG. "Our National DNA Day program, and the sponsorship by Applied Biosystems, has enabled us to reach the younger generation, many of whom will be our future scientists. Partnership and teamwork in both the private and public sector has helped our efforts in raising awareness about the value of genetic science and human genetic research."

The purpose of the Human Genome Project was to generate a resource that could be used for a wide range of biomedical studies, including the search for genetic variations that increase risk of specific diseases, such as cancer, or other disease conditions thought to result from a complex interplay of multiple genetic factors. The growth in knowledge resulting from the mapping of the human genome sequence has enabled life science researchers to better understand the function of genes and discover the genetic basis for health and disease, ultimately resulting in the development of new and highly effective drug therapies and treatments. According to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA), there are currently more than 2,000 drug therapies in development – including 646 for cancer, 146 for heart disease and strokes, 77 for AIDS and 56 for diabetes.

"Since 2003, researchers have made enormous strides in understanding health and disease," said Mark P. Stevenson, President, Molecular and Cell Biology Division, Applied Biosystems. "Advancements in technology enabling more sophisticated research will result in a new generation of interventions and therapies to improve the human condition. Our understanding of health and disease is directly linked to education and understanding the importance of genetic science. Universities, hospitals, private and public companies, policy makers and professional organizations are essential to the effort of raising awareness about how genetics research today can profoundly affect us in the future." In 2003, Applied Biosystems' innovations in automated DNA sequencing helped scientists decode three billion units of human DNA as part of the Human Genome Project.

National DNA Day events are a collaboration of the National Institute of Health's National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), ASHG, GSA, the Genetic Alliance, the National Society of Genetic Counselors and Applied Biosystems. About American Society of Human Genetics

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Founded in 1948, the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG) is the primary professional membership organization for human geneticists in North America. The nearly 8,000 members include researchers, academicians, clinicians, laboratory practice professionals, genetic counselors, nurses and others involved in or with special interest in human genetics. The principal objectives of ASHG are: (1) provide venues to bring investigators opportunities to share their research findings in the many areas of endeavors in human genetics; (2) inform health professionals, legislators, health policy makers and the general public about all aspects of human genetics; and (3) facilitate interactions between geneticists and other communities including policy makers, industry, educators, and patient and public advocacy groups. For more information, please visit [www.GenEdNet.org](http://www.GenEdNet.org).

#### **About Genetics Society of America**

Founded in 1931, the Genetics Society of America (GSA) includes over 4,000 scientists and educators interested in the field of genetics. The Society promotes the communication of advances in genetics through publication of the journal *GENETICS*, and by sponsoring scientific meetings focused on key organisms widely

used in genetic research. The GSA supports genetic science education for students of all ages and advocates for genetic science research funding via the Joint Steering Committee, an organization of several scientific societies that informs Congress about the importance of scientific research. The GSA also seeks to preserve the intellectual heritage of the field of genetics by publishing historical articles in GENETICS and by producing video interviews of notable geneticists, which are now available on DVD under the title, Conversations in Genetics. For more information, please visit [www.genetics-gsa.org](http://www.genetics-gsa.org).

#### **About Applera Corporation and Applied Biosystems**

Applera Corporation consists of two operating groups. The Applied Biosystems Group serves the life science industry and research community by developing and marketing instrument-based systems, consumables, software, and services. Customers use these tools to analyze nucleic acids (DNA and RNA), small molecules, and proteins to make scientific discoveries and develop new pharmaceuticals. Applied Biosystems' products also serve the needs of some markets outside of life science research, which we refer to as "applied markets," such as the fields of: human identity testing (forensic and paternity testing); biosecurity, which refers to products needed in response to the threat of biological terrorism and other malicious, accidental, and natural biological dangers; and quality and safety testing, for example in food and the environment. Applied Biosystems is headquartered in Foster City, CA, and reported sales of over \$1.9 billion during fiscal 2006. The Celera Group is primarily a molecular diagnostics business that is using proprietary genomics and proteomics discovery platforms to identify and validate novel diagnostic markers, and is developing diagnostic products based on these markers. Celera maintains a strategic alliance with Abbott Laboratories for the development and commercialization of molecular, or nucleic acid-based, diagnostic products, and it is also developing new diagnostic products outside of this alliance. Through its genomics and proteomics research efforts, Celera is also discovering and validating therapeutic targets, and it is seeking to develop therapeutic products based on these discovered targets through strategic partnerships. Information about Applera Corporation, including reports and other information filed by the company with the Securities and Exchange Commission, is available at <http://www.applera.com>, or by telephoning 800.762.6923. Information about Applied Biosystems is available at <http://www.appliedbiosystems.com/>.