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2007 National DNA Day Essay Finalist



2nd Annual High School Essay Contest

Congratulations to the Bergen County Academies 2007 DNA Day Essay finalists, Krizia Amar and Kelsey Muller.

National DNA Day is a special opportunity for students, teachers, and the general public to educate themselves on the nuances of genetics and genomics; this day was first founded to recognize both the discovery of the structure of DNA and the 2003 completion of the Human Genome Project.

The 2007 National DNA Day was sponsored by the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), the Genetics Society of America (GSA) and Applied Biosystems (NYSE:ABI), an Applera Corporation business. This annual day celebrates and educates the student and the layman alike on the importance of biomedical research, awareness of its scientific contributions, and recognition of research on and since the mapping of the human genome. In April, DNA Day ambassadors from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) and several partner organizations travelled the country and made presentations at various high schools to emphasize and discuss the value of genetic science.



This year's National DNA Day essay submissions addressed 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 United States possible? By the conclusion of the competition, essays had been submitted 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.

As Kenna Shaw, Director of Education at the American Society of Human Genetics commented: "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...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 the 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."

Congratulations, again, to this year's Bergen County Academies finalists!

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