

# PSI students competed at the 2011 Intel ISEF Competition

The Partnership for Scientific Inquiry (PSI) outreach program at OHSU attracts high school students from the greater Portland metro area who want to learn scientific critical thinking in a non-traditional setting. PSI has been teaching science and pairing students with OHSU faculty mentors since 1999. One of the overall goals of the program is to entice students to participate in local science fair competitions. The Intel International Science and Engineering Fair is the pre-eminent competition, attracting the best projects from students around the world. Quite a few students from Oregon were selected to compete this year (May 13<sup>th</sup>) in Los Angeles. The Oregon students included several from the PSI program!

Among the PSI students who competed, three were winners!

Naomi Shah (Sunset High School) earned a First Award in the Environment Sciences category. In a communication from Naomi to the PSI program administrators, she wrote “I enjoy working on science research projects and definitely have gained a lot through the PSI course in terms of literature synthesis and the scientific process.” Naomi is currently working with Dr. David Lewinsohn and plans to conduct research in his laboratory this summer.

PSI student Meghana Rao (Jesuit High School) received a Second Award in the Environmental Management category. Meghana is currently working with PSI mentor Dr. Lawrence Sherman and is very interested participating in research this summer.

A third student, Spencer Chang (West Linn High School) was honored with a Third Award in the Microbiology section at the Intel competition. Spencer’s project was carried out in the OHSU laboratory of Dr. Ellen Lee (Casey Eye Institute) as part of the PSI program! Spencer was interested in a project about bacterial biofilms and sought out Dr. Lee because of her expertise in *Pseudomonas*. Dr. Lee has been quite impressed with Spencer’s scientific ambitions and natural abilities, and has even commented that Spencer has “renewed my interest in biofilm research”.

Another outstanding student from the PSI program is Kelly Carson (Oregon Episcopal School), who participated in the 2010 PSI class. Kelly has been working with PSI mentor Dr. James Tanyi. She recently won the honor of competing in the 2011 Intel ISEF by being named a finalist at the Northwest Science Expo (NWSE) for her project which was done under the mentorship of Dr. Tanyi. At the NWSE she received four-year scholarships to the University of Oregon, Oregon State University and Lewis and Clark for her outstanding science research project. She also received a first place award in the highly competitive Medicine and Health category at the 2011 Aardvark Science Expo and won the US Air Force Outstanding Project Award at this Fair.

These are only some of the recent accomplishments of a few PSI students. The students overwhelmingly cite the PSI program as a learning experience that has helped them in critically planning and carrying out science projects. Thus, it appears that this popular outreach program is indeed helping to foster a high level of science fair projects among local area students.

2011 PSI Class Coordinators:

(PSI Faculty in alphabetical order)

-Kendra Farris, M.D. (Pediatric Specialist, Legacy Health, Portland, OR)

-Tammy Martin, Ph.D. (Casey Eye Institute, OHSU)

-Leslie Muldoon, Ph.D. (Neuro-Oncology Blood Brain Barrier Program, OHSU)

-Edward Neuwelt, M.D. (Neurology, Neurosurgery, Neuro-Oncology Blood Brain Barrier Program, OHSU)

-James Rosenbaum, M.D. (Casey Eye Institute, Division of Rheumatology, OHSU)

-Richard Rosenbaum, M.D. (Neurology, Oregon Clinic)

(PSI volunteer)

-Priya Bhatt (Bioinformatics student, OHSU)