

High School Student from Kansas Receives Top Honor at International BioGENEius Challenge

Students from Ontario and Pennsylvania named runners-up

June 21, 2017 – San Diego, Calif. – Erin Smith (11th Grade, Kansas) was named the grand prize winner of the International BioGENEius Challenge, the premier competition for high school students that recognizes outstanding research and innovation in biotechnology. Judged by industry and academic experts, Erin's research on a novel telemedicine diagnostic tool for Parkinson's disease stood out among the impressive research from her 14 fellow finalists. Along with the top honor, Erin will return home with a cash prize of \$7,500.

"Every year, we are incredibly impressed with all of the talented young people who compete in the BioGENEius Challenge. This year's winner, Erin Smith, especially wowed us with her innovative thinking and spirit of tenacity, curiosity, and passion for humanity that leads to major breakthroughs in human health," said Seema Kumar, Vice President, Innovation, Global Public Health and Science Policy Communication, Johnson & Johnson. "We are pleased to provide support to the Biotechnology Institute, and we hope to fuel young scientists like Erin and all of the BioGENEius participants by expanding our commitment to champion science through the Dr. Paul Janssen Project."

Tasnia Nabil (11th Grade, Ontario) and Vikram Pandian (11th Grade, Pennsylvania) were named runners-up for their research on a novel computational approach to advance ferromagnetic nanotherapy as a therapeutic solution for cancer and a low-cost portable system to diagnose diseases like HIV and Malaria, respectively.

The winner and runners-up were named during the keynote at the 2017 BIO International Convention, which featured David Cameron, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The International BioGENEius Challenge allows students the unique opportunity of attending the BIO International Convention, a leading biotechnology industry conference, which helps them gain valuable insights from leading biotech companies, scientists, leaders and innovators.

"We could not be more proud and inspired by this year's International BioGENEius Challenge winner and runners-up. They represent the next generation of leading scientists in the biotech world. The research they are working today on will help solve some of the most pressing global health crises in the years to come," said Dr. Lawrence Mahan, President of the Biotechnology Institute. "We applaud them for their forward-thinking projects and commitment to biotechnology research, and we look forward to seeing the breakthroughs they will be a part of in the near future."

The student competitors were evaluated on the quality of their research in biomedical biotechnology. Students were assessed on their presentations and ability to handle questions regarding their research and general scientific knowledge. In addition, each student's research was judged on the potential commercial and practical applications of their project.

The BioGENEius Challenge is organized by the Biotechnology Institute, a U.S. based organization dedicated to biotechnology education. Generous support from sponsors include the Biotechnology Innovation Organization, Global Healthcare Challenge sponsor Johnson & Johnson Innovation, Genentech, Pfizer and Celgene.

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About the Biotechnology Institute

The Biotechnology Institute is an independent, national nonprofit organization dedicated to education about the present and future impact of biotechnology. Its mission is to engage, excite and educate the public, particularly students and teachers, about biotechnology and its immense potential for solving human health, food and environmental problems. For more information, visit www.biotechinstitute.org.