



OSSINING UFSD NEWS

For Immediate Release

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SIX Ossining High School Students Named Intel Semifinalists

(OSSINING, N.Y.) – The OHS Science Department...and all of Ossining High School...was thrilled to learn this week that six seniors were named Semifinalists in the Intel Corporation’s prestigious Science Talent Search 2008 competition. The six OHS students were among only 300 nationwide to receive this honor for their independent college-level scientific research projects.

Micah Joselow, Caitlyn Lia, Yingna Liu, Andrei Popescu, Asha Smith, and Lauren Southwick represent the largest number of Semifinalists named at any one school in Westchester County.

The Semifinalists, who have been enrolled in Ossining High School’s Science Research course taught by Angelo Piccirillo and Valerie Holmes since their sophomore year, will receive \$1,000; an additional \$1,000 (per student) will be awarded to the OHS science department.

“It’s all about passion,” says Director of Math and Science Andra Meyerson. “It’s a reflection of the commitment of the school and science department and the support of the community.”

Micah’s project (“The Effect of Diagonal Stringing on Levels of Vibration and Overall Performance of a Tennis Racket”) showed that diagonal stringing of a tennis racket significantly reduces levels of vibration, without reducing overall performance, and lessened the negative physical effects on a tennis player’s elbow.

The results of Caitlyn’s project (“Independent Conflict-Driven and Expectancy-Driven Mechanisms of Cognitive Control”) suggest that “expectancy-driven control and conflict-driven control are derived from two independent mechanisms within the brain.”

Yingna’s project (“Fighting Against Mosquito Transmitted Diseases: An Effective and Environmental Friendly Method for the Control of Mosquito Population”) tested an easy method people can use to attract egg-laying mosquitoes (stagnant water in containers with protruding wooden twigs or branches) and then kill the mosquito larvae using a solution made from a common household dishwashing detergent.

Andrei’s project (“The Influence of Cell Type Specificity on the Radiation-Induced Bystander Effect”) studied the effect of radiation on cells nearby to those targeted by the therapy. “The results

suggest that the induction of the bystander effect is dependent on both the cell type and cell line,” he concluded.

Asha’s project (“The Effects of Pulsed Electromagnetic Fields on Dopaminergic Neurons”) studied a promising new approach to treating Parkinson’s disease. “The results of my experiment suggest that electromagnetic energy promotes cell survival,” she explains. “This is an important discovery because if the life of nerve cells can be prolonged, the depletion of dopaminergic neurons will decrease and the progression of Parkinson’s disease may be slowed.”

Lauren’s project (“Animated Cartoon Programs’ Effect on the Body Image of Pre-Adolescent Girls; A Two-Part Study: Content Analysis and Examination of Body Image”) looked at the effect of television content on body image dissatisfaction in 49 pre-adolescent girls. Her results suggest that “animated cartoon programs are focused on exaggerated body types and viewing these programs has minor effects on body image.”

While thrilled with being named Intel Semifinalists, the students recently spoke predominantly about their OHS Science Research experience and their teachers. They all agreed that taking the course has honed their speaking, presenting, writing, and organization skills. “We’re prepared for college,” says Micah. And while Asha emphasizes the level of independence in the course (“We didn’t have anyone holding our hands”), all agreed that Mr. Piccirillo’s and Ms. Holmes’s support was key. “They were always there,” Micah says, “They’d e-mail us back at four in the morning...all summer long!”

Of the 300 Semifinalists, 40 Finalists will be chosen to attend the Science Talent Institute in Washington, DC, in March, where they will participate in the final judging process and compete for \$530,000 in scholarships.

OHS Science Research students will also participate in upcoming competitions in February and March. On Thursday, May 1, they will present their research projects to the community at the annual Science Research Symposium, scheduled for 7 p.m. in the OHS gymnasium.

Pictured here, from left, are Lauren Southwick, Asha Smith, Caitlyn Lia, Yingna Liu, Micah Joselow, and Andrei Popescu.

The Ossining Union Free School District, nationally recognized for its mission to further the success of all children, serves approximately 4,200 pupils in six schools: Roosevelt School for newborn to four-year-olds, Park Early Childhood Center for kindergarten through first grade, Brookside School for grades two and three, Claremont School for grades four and five, Anne M. Dorner Middle School for grades six through eight, and Ossining High School for grades nine through 12.

[January 18, 2008]