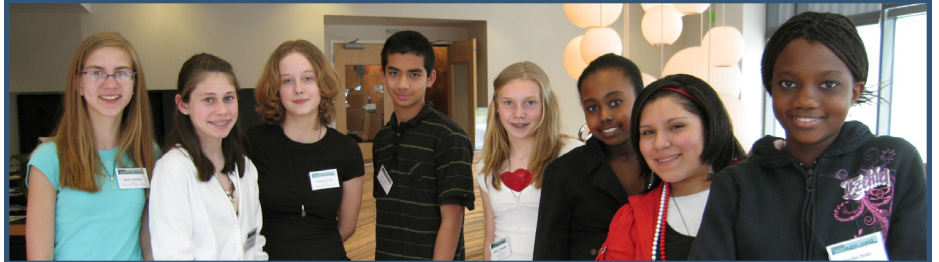


RESEARCH BITS

“Biomedical Breakthroughs and My Life” Essay Contest Awards’ Day

Seattle Children’s Research Institute hosted the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR) “Biomedical Breakthroughs and My Life” essay contest award ceremony on May 23, 2008. Winning students, their teacher and a parent were invited to the Awards’ Day program at Seattle Children’s Research Institute. In addition to the awards ceremony, the program included the opportunity to tour the facility, meet scientists and participate in hands-on activities.



Winners from the 2008 NWABR “Biomedical Breakthroughs and My Life” Essay Contest. From left to right: Molly Lindberg, Claire Sullivan, Melissa Piccard, Francis Wilson, Lindsey Vandergrift, Mary Yirdaw, Claudia Castro, Khadija Diallo.
Not pictured: Silke Bachhuber

Janice Wignall and **Amanda Jones**, PhD, co-directors of Science Education and Outreach at the research institute, led the students and their guests through an exciting laboratory exercise making DNA necklaces. After collecting cheek cells from their own mouths, the students lysed the cells with a soapy solution and then precipitated the released DNA with ethanol. They collected the DNA, which appeared as white, stringy clumps, into tiny plastic vials that were strung onto a necklace!

The NWABR “Biomedical Breakthroughs and My Life” essay contest is a Northwest regional contest for 7th and 8th graders. Students’ essays addressed the impacts of biomedical research on their lives by answering some of the following questions:

- How does biomedical research impact you?
- Have you (or has someone in your family) benefited from vaccinations, pharmaceutical drugs, medical devices, surgery or transplants?
- How does biomedical research affect the health of your dog, cat or other pet?
- How might biomedical research touch your life in the future?

The essays also had to address the importance of biomedical research and how animal models and/or human clinical trials contribute to medical breakthroughs. The winning essays, selected from over 285 entries from 7th and 8th grade students throughout Washington and Oregon, were inspiring examples of the personal impacts of biomedical research. Through topics such as Alzheimer’s, the development of the polio vaccine and treatments for cancer, students explored

Congratulations to all of the winners!

Claire Sullivan, Assumption St. Bridget School, 1st Overall
Silke Bachhuber, Homeschool, 2nd Overall
Molly Lindberg, Washington Middle School, 3rd Overall
Lindsey Vandergrift, Seattle Academy of A&S, 1st Western WA Region
Melissa Piccard, Washington Middle School, 2nd Western WA Region
Francis Wilson, Lakeside Middle School, 3rd Western WA Region
Claudia Castro, Washington Middle School, 1st ESL Western WA Region
Mary Yirdaw, Washington Middle School, 2nd ESL Western WA Region
Khadija Diallo, Washington Middle School, Honorable Mention ESL Western WA

how research affects their own lives and the lives of their families and friends. All entries addressed how animal models and/or human clinical trials contributed to biomedical breakthroughs. The reflective paragraphs written by the students confirmed that this contest was a valuable introduction to biomedical research and the process of developing treatments and cures.

The winning essays can be read on the [NWABR Web site](#). ~irn