



NWABR Receives DNA Day Funding from NIH

Funding provides professional development workshop for local science teachers on DNA-related topics

Seattle, WA – October 7, 2009 – The Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR) has been selected as one of only three organizations in the US to receive funding for a 2010 DNA Day event. NWABR will hold a special professional development symposium for high school teachers focusing on DNA-related curriculum and classroom resources. The award was made through the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). “Coming on the heels of this week’s announcement that the Nobel Prize in Medicine has been awarded for work on telomeres, the end caps of DNA chromosomes, the timing of NWABR’s selection by NHGRI to receive this grant award is exceptional,” stated Susan Adler, NWABR Executive Director. “Research in this field has therapeutic applications for aging and cancer biology that cannot be realized unless we engage our next generation of biomedical researchers in furthering these discoveries.”

NWABR’s program, entitled DNA-LEAP (Life Sciences Education Advancement Partnership), is a day-long symposium providing professional development and curriculum related to genetics and genomics to middle and high school science teachers. The symposium is scheduled to take place on March 6, 2010 at Amgen, Seattle, and will introduce 40 educators to curricular materials that focus on genetics, genomics, and bioethics. Through this opportunity for teachers, students in both public and private schools throughout the Puget Sound will benefit from current curriculum related to DNA.

“This funding allows NWABR and our colleagues in the life sciences education community to share the excitement of what’s happening in molecular biology and genetic research and to *provide cutting-edge genetic education resources to our local educators*,” said Jeanne Ting Chowning, NWABR Director of Education. We will be partnering with the outstanding education programs in several of our member institutions to create this symposium: Seattle Biomedical Research Institute, BioQuest Program; University of Washington Department of Genome Sciences Education Outreach; and Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Science Education Partnership.

Teachers will be oriented to the extensive resources available for teaching DNA-related topics, many of which were developed with prior federal funding. The event will consist of several short workshops featuring DNA-related curriculum developed by the LEAP partners that teachers can take directly back to their classrooms. The overall goals are to

- increase teacher understanding of genetics and genomics, including ethical issues related to genetic research;
- increase educator awareness about programs and resources related to teaching genetics, genomics, and bioethics concepts;
- introduce resources available from NHGRI; and
- foster a learning community among education outreach professionals and teachers geared towards improving genetics education.

About NWABR

NWABR is a non-profit dedicated to promoting public understanding of the implications and applications of the process of biomedical research. Members include industry, academia, health care, and voluntary health organizations. The organization meets a fundamental need for materials that engage students in the scientific and ethical dimensions of topics such as embryonic stem cell research and human clinical trials. NWABR’s lesson materials promote discourse and decision-making based on thoughtful analysis and critical reasoning, and stress the importance of understanding the science behind bioethical issues.

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National DNA Day Awards 2010: <http://www.genome.gov/26523655>