PLTW Biomedical Students at Cleveland High School Organize Inaugural NWABR-Sponsored Science Café

Seattle - February 18, 2011 - Project Lead the Way (PLTW) biomedical science students, in Cleveland High School’s School of Life Sciences, organized and executed the inaugural Cleveland Science Café serving 50 students and 9 teachers. The purpose of the Junior Science Café, modeled after another Café operated by the Northwest Association for Biomedical Research (NWABR), is to provide students and scientists the opportunity to have more informal conversations about biomedical science. In order to create a more social atmosphere, food and drinks are served; hence the name ‘café.’ The Café is made possible by a grant to NWABR entitled “Collaborations to Understand Research and Ethics”, a Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) from the National Institutes of Health. NWABR is a “non-profit educational organization established in 1988 to promote the public understanding of biomedical research and its ethical conduct.”

The inaugural Cleveland Science Café welcomed Gladys Keitany from Seattle BioMed to discuss her malaria research for a University of Washington Ph.D., as well as her journey to biomedical research while growing up in Kenya. Ms. Keitany’s work focuses on the development of a malaria vaccine for pregnant women. Her message of perseverance and hope through medical advances resonated especially with one student originally from the Republic of Congo. He had asked more than his share of questions during the discussion, so at the Café’s conclusion, Ms. Keitany asked him how he was so knowledgeable. He answered, “I read a lot and I want to be like you. I want to be a scientist.” To learn more about Gladys, please visit: http://www.seattlebiomed.org/stories-gladys-keitany. According to their website, “Seattle Biomedical Research Institute (Seattle BioMed) was founded at a time when infectious disease research in the U.S. was rare.” The vision of Seattle BioMed is “to create an environment where the brightest scientists from around the world would come together and generate new knowledge, develop innovative solutions and ultimately combat the world’s deadliest diseases.” To learn more about the work that Seattle BioMed is doing to eradicate global infectious diseases, please visit: http://www.seattlebiomed.org/fast-facts. Seattle BioMed is also dedicated to science education, with programs like their BioQuest Academy.

The Science Cafés are organized and run by Cleveland BioExpo Club officers, elected by students in Dr. Jeff Shaver’s PLTW Principles of Biomedical Sciences classes. BioExpo Club is a cadre of students all competing in NWABR’s BioExpo science fair now in its 11th year. These same students are volunteering to lead the Café. Each of these student leaders selected one of four teams to be responsible for, including Host, Evaluation, Public Relations, and Café Liaison. The Host team is responsible for welcoming people to the café, introducing the café scientist, and leading the question and answer sessions at the end of the café. The Evaluation team is responsible for evaluating the success of each café, and taking notes during organizing meetings and each café. The Public Relations team is responsible for marketing the café, and the Café Liaison team is responsible for communicating with all science café stakeholders. For their service in planning, organizing and executing the Cleveland science café events these student leaders are earning hours towards Service Learning Requirements, gaining valuable business and leadership skills, and participating in a unique experience that is valuable on their resume or college application. Additionally, they are providing Cleveland students with the opportunity to meet local scientists who myth-bust the stereotypical scientist image and learn science they wouldn’t otherwise explore in class.

The next Cleveland Science Café is on Monday, March 14th from 10:40-11:45am in Cleveland’ Global Commons (Room 2122). The topic of this café will be Autism, and our expected guest scientist will be Dr. Lisa Ibanez from the University of Washington Autism Center. This is just one way that Career + Technical Education and Project Lead the Way provide cutting edge, relevant, high-rigor education. These programs connect students to the fast-paced fields of study and endeavor that represent the best of what we do in secondary education.

For more information, please see www.nwabr.org or contact:

Jeanne Chowning, Director of Education
Northwest Association for Biomedical Research
jchowning@nwabr.org
(206) 957-3337x303

Jennifer Wroblewski, Public Engagement Manager
Northwest Association for Biomedical Research
jenniferw@nwabr.org
(206) 957-3337x305

Jeff Shaver, Café Teacher Sponsor
Cleveland High School
jmshaver@seattleschools.org