



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Summer Science at Sbarro Institute: International program mentors college and high school students for 15th year**

(September 1, 2008) -- What did you do during your summer vacation? For twelve college and high school students, the answer includes learning high-tech skills in a molecular biology laboratory at the Sbarro Institute for Cancer Research and Molecular Medicine, located on the campus of Temple University in Philadelphia, PA.

For the fifteenth consecutive year, young people from the U.S. and Italy worked side by side with researchers at the Sbarro Institute. Their work was sponsored by the Sbarro Health Research Organization (SHRO), a cancer, cardiovascular and diabetes research group, the Langfitt Foundation and the Physician Scientists Training Program (PSTP), a program of Temple University designed to prepare high-achieving minority junior and high school students for biomedical research careers in academia or the pharmaceutical industry.

"These young people represent the future for research and clinical medical practice," said Antonio Giordano, M.D., Ph.D., founder and president of SHRO and director of the Center for Biotechnology at Temple University's College of Science and Technology. "The interaction of scientists and students not only gives students the chance to experience life in the lab, but allows their mentors a to see some of the next generation of brilliant scientists."

Students worked on a variety of projects at a variety of levels. Francesco Guiglia, a student from Italy who plans a career in molecular biology, worked with Sbarro researcher Andrew Puca, on a number of sophisticated laboratory techniques -- ranging from leukemic cell cultures, hematopoietic stem cell isolation and cultures, immuno-flourescence, use of microgravity cell cultures, as well as utilizing ferromagnetic polymer to coat cardiac stents. Less experienced students were introduced to basic lab techniques including Western blot, a method to identify proteins in tissues, and PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction), a method employed to amplify a piece of DNA.

For mentor Flavio Rizzolio, a visiting research scholar at the Sbarro Institute, the summer program helped to introduce his young charges to both the technical and intellectual rigor necessary for success in a possible future scientific career.

"The goal of the program was to see if the students liked science enough to perhaps continue their education in the field, as well as to gain valuable experience at a very young age," says Rizzolio, who noted that such opportunities do not really exist in his native Italy.



Giulia Ravaioli, a college student from Ferrara, Italy, found the chance to work with cancer researchers looking at the disease on the molecular level a “wonderful opportunity.”

For Noah Rush, an incoming junior at Cheltenham High School in Cheltenham, PA, the lab gave him a new vocabulary with which to discuss science, as well as a great experience to take back to his high school lab.

“Along with technical tasks, our mentors worked with us to understand the results and experiments going on in the entire lab,” says Rush.

“I really liked the trust the SHRO scientists put in students,” says Rob Fratamico, who is majoring in Biology at Temple University. Fratamico, who plans to attend medical school, spent part of his summer working with the retinoblastoma genes.

Although Fratamico plans to head for medical school, he said the summer research provided a great experience to understand science beyond the clinical view. “Plus,” he notes, “It’s been a great chance to practice my Italian.”

Nikea Frith, a PSTP participant, worked closely with Marco Cassone, M.D., Ph.D., an assistant professor at the Sbarro Institute. Her summer study included growing cell cultures in an effort to try to understand initial resistance factors to antibiotics.

“When I first arrived at the lab,” she says, “I merely watched Dr. Cassone and attempted to pick up the skill he was teaching me, but then I began to do it on my own.”

“But by the end of the summer I felt accomplished. I think I gained some of the basic skills of working in a lab amongst professionals. This is really preparing me for where I want to head in life, and I feel very privileged that I had the opportunity to intern at the Sbarro Institute.”

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