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Harlem Children Society & Dr. Sat Bhattacharya Score an "A"



Dr. Pola Rosen accepting Harlem Dream Award from Dr. Sat Bhattacharya



(L-R) Sheveen Greene, HCS class '02; Pat Goldman, Pres., JE and EZ Butler Foundation and Dr. Sat Battacharya

Recently, Dr. Pola Rosen, founder and publisher of *Education Update*, was honored by the Harlem Children Society with its "Harlem Dream Award" for her outstanding work in education. In accepting the award, Dr. Rosen explained that she and Dr. Bhattacharya had met years ago sharing their dreams and visions for education. Quoting Emerson, Rosen stated that the 100 students present, in pursuing their quest for scientific knowledge were like "men [who]love to wonder and that is the seed of science." She spoke of the importance of tenacity in following one's dreams.

The Harlem Children Society started with just three students in 2000 under the tutelage of Dr. Sat Bhattacharya at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and has grown to over 650—over 275 in New York, to 50 across the country, and over 350 across the globe, mentored by over 1000 scientists, engineers and doctors in over 100 institutions including Cornell, Columbia, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center to NASA. HCS's innovative program engages students in one-on-one hands-on science research in a myriad of fields in science, technology, math & engineering.

Harlem Children Society (HCS) inducted over 600 high school and undergraduate students into its premier Science, Engineering, and Mathematics & Bio/Medical Internship Program in a ceremony at Weill Cornell Medical College's Uris Auditorium. The inductees, primarily high school students, are all from extremely impoverished and under-served backgrounds. In the US HCS student population alone, 95% are of minority representation, with 58% of them being young women.

Dr. Sat Bhattacharya, President and CEO of HCS, drew everyone's attention to a series of striking screen images above the stage. In a display of virtual global unity, HCS in New York was simultaneously connected via tele/videoconference to its HCS sister sites in the Hopi reservation in Arizona, New Hampshire, Florida, Mexico, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, India and New Zealand.

Educators, community leaders and ambassadorial emissaries from participating countries, including heads of local government—like the Kenyan Minister of Higher Education, Science & Technology, Dr. Kilemi Mwiria; Ambassador General of Ethiopia, Mr. Teruneh Zena, participated at the different sites.

Dr. Sat spoke of students as HCS ambassadors and their future involvement, saying, "I will really feel proud when you take the baton and pass it to someone else... It is your responsibility to get more people involved. Take this message across and spread the word. You are our

Special guest speakers featured Mr. John C. Liu, New York City Council member who proclaimed, "... We're going to unleash you to the world, and there's no limit, no end, to what you can accomplish..."

NYC Deputy Mayor of Education and Community Development, Mr. Dennis Walcott noted how inspiring the HCS program was and emphasized HCS students' critical role in revitalizing preeminence in science in the US.

Princess Kara Parker-Smith, HCS Class of 2005, and rising sophomore at Carnegie Mellon University, presented her research entitled, "Shape Memory Alloys and Applications in the Field of Biomedical Engineering." Next, Christian Garcia, HCS Class of 2006, and currently a mechanical engineering student at University of Central Florida, presented his research project entitled, "Hybrid Rocketry & Micro Channel Cooling of Unequal Circumferential Heating."

HCS then bestowed annual Presidential Honors and Awards. Ecuador native, Paolo Lizano (HCS Class of 2001), and HCS 2008 Student of the Year honoree, spoke of how his HCS experience has led him to pursue his MD/PhD at UMDNJ focused in reversing the effects of post-coronary trauma and loss of heart function. He then presented his high school mentor, Nadia Makar, HCS' 2008 Teacher of the Year Award in a moving moment demonstrating the unbreakable bond between mentor and student.

Dual HCS 2008 Parent/Guardian of the Year Award recipients, Maria Brito and Rosa Garcia, grandmother and mother of HCS student Christian Garcia, both stood at the podium as Ms. Garcia said, "Having an education is one of the greatest things about this country." Professor Susan Fahrenholtz of Fordham University and HCS 2008 Educator of the Year took a moment to recognize Dr. Bhattacharya's great heart and work as a preeminent scientist and leader of the HCS program.

Dr. Estomih Mtui, a native of Tanzania and physician at Weill Cornell Medical College, discussed Dr. Sat's recent visit to Africa and ground-breaking work in establishing HCS's program on that continent. He advised students, "There will be a lot of sacrifice on your way... requiring a lot of hard work, determination, and courage... But with your sacrifice and perseverance, you will prevail."

The Honorable Andrew Conseen Duff, American Indian Science and Engineering Society President, and native Cherokee Indian delivered what was at once a speech, yet an experience in storytelling. He offered several challenges to the students: first, "...to contemplate... that here in the United States exist people indigenous to this land, who existed when the Mayflower

to think about the sciences in the context of both where the students are from and where they're going. As yet a third challenge, he urged students to evaluate and diplomatically question the old norms in their particular fields, for therein are the breakthroughs.

Mr. Duff further discussed the importance of nature. He began by speaking about water, and drew the audience's attention to the beaded images on his shirt, explaining their meaning as water's equivalence to life. He then turned to corn and the eagle, and in the Hopi culture, how intrinsically meaningful they are. Mr. Duff drew analogies to the HCS students, comparing them to the kernels of corn, and to the soaring eagle upon feathered wing.

With that, the HCS 2008 Induction Ceremony was adjourned. The event had officially and effectively launched HCS students into an exciting program where they will work one-on-one beside their mentors for what promises to be a highly successful summer.#