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NIH NEWS RELEASE

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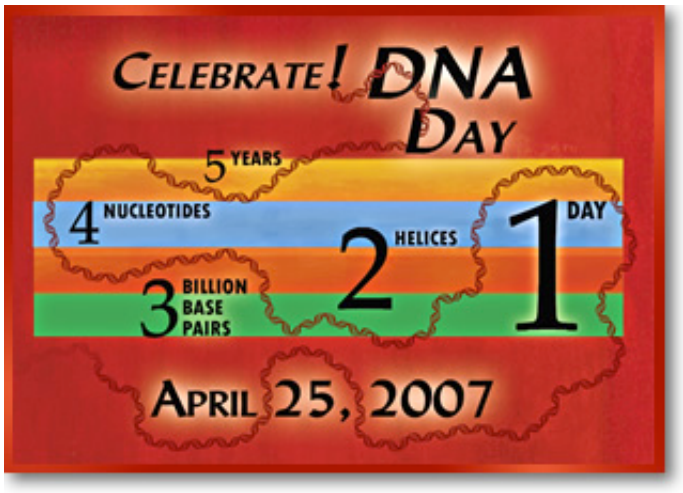
Fifth National DNA Day to Showcase Genomic Discoveries and Careers

DNA Day Ambassadors Reach Out to High Schools in the Southeast



Monday, March. 26, 2007 - The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), will mark the fifth annual National DNA Day on April 25 with events aimed at building high school students' awareness of genetics and genomics. April 25 commemorates both the discovery in 1953 of DNA's double helix and the 2003 completion of the Human Genome Project.

During the month of April, DNA Day Ambassadors from NHGRI and partner organizations will make presentations in high schools around the country - from Alaska to Maryland - as part of National DNA Day. This year, a special effort will be made to reach out to students in the southeastern United States, with researchers, health professionals and other genomic experts from NHGRI scheduled to travel to about 60 schools in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

Drawing on their frontline work in NHGRI labs and clinics, the ambassadors will describe the latest advances in genomics and explain what those advances mean for the future of health care. They will also engage students in dialogues about the ethical, legal and social implications of genomic research, as well as inform them about the many career and training opportunities in this rapidly emerging field.

"The field of genomics offers extraordinary possibilities for our best and brightest students," said Vence Bonham, J.D., chief of NHGRI's Education and Community Involvement Branch. "Through face-to-face interaction with scientists and educators, the seeds of interest are being planted and will grow beyond surface curiosity about genomics. The next generation of genomics scientists will be making high-impact discoveries in a new era of genomics and personalized medicine."

In addition to the ambassadors from NHGRI, more than 100 biomedical students from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill will visit North Carolina high schools, replicating the NHGRI model for

National DNA Day in an outreach to 67 area schools. Meanwhile schools in Georgia and Florida will also be visited by genetics experts from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Emory University Center for Science Education in Atlanta, and the International Society of Nurses in Genetics.

National DNA Day activities extend far beyond the southeastern region. For example, at the request of the public school science curriculum supervisor of Prince George's County, Md., NHGRI ambassadors, with counterparts from the National Coalition for Health Professional Education in Genetics, will visit nearly all of the county's high schools on April 18. In addition, on April 28, 80 high school students and their teachers in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area will be invited to be NHGRI's guests at *Ferocious Beauty: Genome*, a unique dance-meets-science performance by the renowned Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. The performance, along with a workshop featuring NHGRI researchers and Liz Lerman dancers, will offer participants an opportunity to explore genomics through spoken word and movement.

No matter where they live, students and teachers can participate in National DNA Day through a live, moderated online chat with NHGRI researchers. On April 25, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern time, NHGRI experts will be on hand to field questions from students on a wide range of topics, including basic science, clinical research, genomic careers and the ethical, legal and social implications of genomic research. For those unable to participate in the live event, a full transcript of the chat will be available on the main DNA Day Web page, www.genome.gov/DNAday, after the chat room closes.

National DNA Day events are a collaboration of NHGRI, the American Society of Human Genetics, the Genetics Society of America, the Genetic Alliance and the National Society of Genetic Counselors.

A variety of free, educational tools on genetics and genomics, including webcasts, podcasts and an online multimedia presentation called Understanding The Human Genome Project, are available at www.genome.gov/DNAday.

NHGRI is one of the 27 institutes and centers at the NIH, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services. Additional information about NHGRI can be found at its Web site, www.genome.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH)?The Nation's Medical Research Agency?includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is the primary federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and it investigates the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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