

# Montréal student wins top genomics award at Canada-Wide Science Fair 2004

**Nine students from Prince George, Queen Charlotte City, Saskatoon, Calgary, Winnipeg, Mississauga and Oakville get more than \$20,000 in prizes**

St. John's, Newfoundland – May 21, 2004 – St. John's was host to over 470 students competing for top prizes at the Canada-Wide Science Fair this past week. Nine students from across Canada were awarded the top Genomics Awards at (CWSF), a highly competitive category at the fair. This year's grand prize winner is Kota Talla from Centennial Regional High School in Montreal for his project "Cycling back to the origins". Kota, who also won the top Genome Québec award last month, focused his project on the mapping of the eukaryotic mammalian origins of DNA replication. "I analyzed six distinct regions on human chromosome 19 for origin activity and tumor specificity," said Kota Talla. "My project was made possible through the assistance of the McGill Cancer Centre, Department of Oncology, especially, Dr. Maria Zannis-Hadjopoulos and the late Dr. Gerald Price (October 2003), who I really would like to thank today for their encouragement and guidance." The nine recipients will be sharing \$20,000 in total scholarship and cash prizes awarded by Genome Canada in the Genomics Awards category. There were more than 370 projects, involving more than 470 students and 400 judges and teachers in CWSF-St. John's - the culmination of science fairs involving more than 25,000 students across the country. The students are judged by university teachers or professionals in related fields to determine the depth of their scientific work, and their ability to communicate their findings to both the judges and the public.

===== The Genomics Awards winners are: Senior: 1st: (\$2500 + \$5000 for a scholarship at a Canadian university of choice) - Kota Talla, "Cycling back to the origins", Centennial Regional High School, Montréal, Québec 2nd: (\$1500) - Vlad Lavrovsky, "Directed Evolution of Hydrocarbon Degrading Bacteria", Queen Elizabeth Jr/Sr High, Calgary, Alberta 3rd: (\$1000) - Man-Wen Hsiao, "How Do Doctors Diagnose the Early Stage of Diabetes?", Mentor College, Mississauga, Ontario Intermediate: 1st: (\$2000 + Wisdom Exchange Program (see below for details) - Kimberly Richards, "Choose Them and Lose Them?" Walter Murray Collegiate, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 2nd: (\$1000) - Adrian, De Jay, Nicolas Veres, "Ras : protéine au role double?", Collège Brébeuf, Montréal Québec 3rd : (\$500) - Richardson, Jamie, Leptin for Cowboys, Queen Charlotte Secondary School, Queen Charlotte City, BC Junior: 1st: (\$750) - Kristopher Gaiesky, "It's All Relative", D.P. Todd Secondary, Prince George, BC 2nd: (\$500) - Yale Michaels, "The Role of Gap Junctions in Apoptosis", Grant Park High School, Winnipeg, Manitoba 3rd: (\$250) - Natalie Fox, "Problems with the Blueprints of Our Body", Eastview Public School, Oakville, Ontario

===== "The young Canadians that participate in the Canada-Wide Science Fair not only demonstrate their understanding of science, but they also showcase their analytical and leadership skills as well as their motivation to succeed," said Dr. Martin Godbout, President & CEO of Genome Canada. "We are proud to support these young Canadians on their path to success!" "Genome Atlantic is pleased to be involved in the Canada-Wide Science Fair", said Dr. Michael Dennis, President of Genome Atlantic and one of three Genomics judges attending the Science Fair. "Judging the projects was no easy task. These young students have all demonstrated their in-depth knowledge of complex subjects and have done a great job of presenting their work." The Genome Canada Genomics Awards, created in 2002, recognize outstanding projects related to the study of DNA and its properties (i.e., the disciplines of genomics, genetics, proteomics and bioinformatics) in any living organism, in each of the junior, intermediate and senior categories of the Canada-Wide

Science Fair. Awards range from \$250 for a third place in the junior category to \$2,500 for a first place in the senior category. A scholarship of \$5,000 to a Canadian university of their choice is also presented to the first-place senior winner. The Wisdom Exchange Program, which is awarded to a young intermediate-level scientist, provides the winner with the opportunity to visit a Canadian genomics/proteomics research facility. Last year's winner, Josh Eisenstat, toured the McGill University and Genome Québec Innovation Centre and met with Dr. Tom Hudson, Director of the Centre. This year's winner will decide within the next few weeks where he wants to go. As a major national sponsor of the Canada-Wide Science Fair, Genome Canada distributes annual awards to the students for a total value of \$40,000. This amount includes a \$5,000 annual contribution to Team Canada - YSF, the selection of top young Canadian scientists who champion our nation each year at the Intel International Science Fair in the United States. Genome Canada also promotes and participates, through its five Genome Centres, in many local science fairs across Canada and will participate at the next national Canada-Wide Science Fair, which will take place in Vancouver, British Columbia.

-30- Genome Canada is the primary funding and information resource relating to genomics and proteomics in Canada. Dedicated to developing and implementing a national strategy in genomics and proteomics research for the benefit of all Canadians, it has so far received \$375 million from the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada committed an additional \$60 million to Genome Canada in the 2004 Federal Budget. To date, Genome Canada has invested more than \$365 million across Canada, which, when combined with funding from other partners, is expected to result in more than \$800 million in 79 innovative research projects and sophisticated science and technology platforms. The Wisdom Exchange Program is a unique feature of the partnership between YSF Canada and Genome Canada, designed to reward and encourage a top young Canadian scientist to continue his or her interest in genomics, and to provide an opportunity for her or him to share the exciting experience with their peers. This program invites the First Prize winner of the Genomics Award in the Intermediate age category to visit the Genome Canada research centre of his or her choice, with travel paid for the winner(s) and a chaperone. The visit includes a tour of one of the top genomics facilities in the country, to meet and talk to leading researchers about the winners' project and exciting new developments in genomic research. The winner is also offered a free trip to the following year's CWSF to report on his or her experiences. For more information, please contact: Anie Perrault, Vice-president, Communications Genome Canada Cell. : (613) 296-7292