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TEXAS AND NEW YORK TEENS TAKE REGIONAL TITLE IN NATION'S TOP HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE COMPETITION

Siemens Competition Regional Winners Announced for Southwest Next Stop: National Finals and a Shot at \$100,000

Elizabeth Monier of San Antonio, Texas, Wins Top Individual Prize;
Jenny Yeh of Sugar Land, Texas and Mary Catherine Wen of Woodside, New York Win
Top Team Prize

AUSTIN, TX, November 11, 2006 — Biology and biomedicine earned top honors tonight for Elizabeth Monier, and Jenny Yeh and Mary Catherine Wen in the Southwestern Regional Finals of the 2006-07 Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology, the nation's premier high school science competition.

The prestigious Siemens Competition, a signature program of the Siemens Foundation, is administered by the College Board. As Siemens Competition National Finalists, tonight's winners will be invited to join an elite group of just six individuals and six teams competing at the Siemens National Finals at New York University in New York this December for scholarships ranging from \$10,000 to the top prize of \$100,000.

"These young science stars are a shining example of American ingenuity at its most inspiring," said James Whaley, president of the Siemens Foundation. "They have more than upheld the exceptionally high standards set by their predecessors in this Super Bowl of science competitions."

The students presented their research this weekend to a panel of judges from the The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), host of the Southwestern Regional Finals.

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Elizabeth Monier, a senior at Keystone School in San Antonio, Texas, won the individual category and a \$3,000 college scholarship for her project on incorporating gene silencing techniques in prevention methods against Parkinson's disease.

Jenny Yeh, a senior at St. Agnes Academy in Houston, Texas and Mary Catherine Wen, a senior at Archbishop Molloy High School at Briarwood, New York won the team category and will share a \$6,000 scholarship for their project on using magnetic fields to help enhance bone cell growth and increase the rate of fracture healing.

The Winners

In her winning project, *The Effects of Gene Suppression and Exposure to MPTP on Dopamine Neurons of C. elegans as a Model for Parkinson's disease*, Elizabeth Monier looked at whether the genes of *C. elegans*, a species of microscopic worms and the simplest multicellular organism, could be altered to model the prevention of Parkinson's disease in humans.

"Elizabeth exhibited unusual creativity and independence in choosing and studying the problem: She chose a very important model organism that makes research more definitive and incorporated a new technology, Interference RNA, that can be used to turn off gene expression," said competition judge, Dr. James Walker, Professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology, UT Austin. "Her research has clear clinical applications, bringing us a step closer to finding a cure for the debilitating Parkinson's disease."

Ms. Monier's mentors were Scott Maderer, Keystone School Physics and Chemistry Teacher and Julie Etzler, University of Texas Health Science Center Graduate Student.

Elizabeth Monier was a 2005-2006 Siemens Westinghouse Semifinalist. She is active in her school and in community associations and is the National Honor Society President, Key Club Member, St. Elizabeth Catholic Church Altar Server and Teen Eucharistic Minister. She plays the piano and is an avid volleyball player. Her first passion is science and she has won a number of prestigious science prizes and awards, including the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair 1st Grand Prize (2005, 2006). Ms. Monier plans to study biology in college and hopes to become either a reconstructive plastic surgeon or a genetic research scientist.

Jenny Yeh and Mary Catherine Wen won the team prize for their project, *Proliferation and Alignment of Osteoblasts on Oriented Magnetic Nanocomposites*. The team's research combines a magnetic fields component with materials science to help enhance growth of bone cells and accelerate fracture and wound healing.

“Jenny and Mary Catherine’s project has obvious medical applications and could lead to finding a better cure for bones that don’t grow easily,” said competition judge, Dr. Wolfgang Frey, Assistant Professor of Biomedical Engineering, UT Austin. “We were impressed with the unique way the team used three distinct materials in their research, combining polymers, natural clays and nanoparticles.”

The team’s mentors were Dr. Miriam Rafailovich, Dr. Nadine Pernodet, and Nicole Brenner from Stony Brook University and Hilana Lewkowitz-Shpuntoff from Princeton University. The team conducted their research together over the summer, then continued to correspond by phone and e-mail from Texas and New York to complete their project.

Jenny Yeh is a member of Math Club, National Honors Society, Model United Nations, Student Council, and Eastern Pacific Youth Club among others. Fluent in Chinese, she plays the flute and has won a number of awards for her musical ability. She plans to study nutrition and pre-medicine in college and would like to become a physician specializing in nutrition and weight management.

Mary Catherine Wen has placed second at New York State Science and Engineering Fair and ROHM and HAAS Invitational Science Fair, and won several awards at NYC Science Olympiad. She is fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and plays the flute. She considers Astronaut Charles Camarda, a graduate of her high school who worked for NASA as an aerospace engineer and traveled in space, as her hero. She would like to become a chemical engineer.

Runners-up each received a \$1,000 scholarship. In addition, the Siemens Foundation awards \$2,000 per project to the high school of every regional finalist.

Runners-up in the individual category were:

- Harrison Chen, Chelmsford High School, North Chelmsford, MA
- Yieu Chyan, Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science, Denton, TX
- Amelia Lin, Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science, Denton, TX
- Nancy Satsangi, Northside Health Careers High School, San Antonio, TX

Team runners-up were:

- Wilson Hsieh & Lisa Herrington, Plano West Senior High School, Plano, TX
- Asad Moten, Clear Creek High School, League City, TX,
Benjamin Macaluso, Sachem High School East, Farmingville, NY &
Pooja Vasudevan, The Wheatley School, Old Westbury, NY
- Tiffany Tsang, Lyndon B. Johnson High School, Austin, TX &
Kimberly Yeh, Stephen F. Austin High School, Sugar Land, TX

The Siemens Competition

The Siemens Competition was launched in 1998 to recognize America's best and brightest math and science students. This year, 1,660 students entered the competition.

Entries are judged at the regional level by esteemed scientists at six leading research universities which host the regional competitions: Carnegie Mellon University (Middle States), University of Notre Dame (Midwest), Stanford University (West), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (New England), Georgia Institute of Technology (South), and The University of Texas at Austin (Southwest).

The Siemens National Finals, judged by a panel of nationally renowned scientists and mathematicians, will take place December 1–4 at New York University in New York.

Log on to www.siemens-foundation.org to watch Elizabeth Monier, Jenny Yeh and Mary Catherine Wen during a webcast from the Siemens Competition National Finals in New York. Webcast schedule: Student presentations on Sunday, December 3, 12:00pm-5:00pm EST. Live webcast of the national winners press conference on Monday, December 4, from 8:30am EST.

The Siemens Foundation

The Siemens Foundation, established in 1998, is a national leader in math and science education, providing nearly \$2 million in scholarships and awards annually. Based in Iselin, New Jersey, the Foundation's signature programs – the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology, the Siemens Awards for Advanced Placement, and the Siemens Teacher Scholarships – recognize exceptional achievement in science, math and technology. By supporting outstanding students today, and recognizing the teachers and schools that inspire their excellence, the Foundation helps nurture tomorrow's scientists and engineers. The Foundation's mission is based on the culture of innovation, research and educational support that is the hallmark of Siemens' U.S. operating companies and its parent company, Siemens AG. For more information, please visit www.siemens-foundation.org.

NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of winners available on request.

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