

Diverse Students Explore Medicine at OHSU

Program gives youth new opportunities

Angel Ajtum-Sanchez slowly, carefully injects green fluorescent protein into zebra fish embryos in the David Ransom Lab at Oregon Health & Science University. Later he examines the embryos under a microscope to see if the embryos' development has been affected.

Ajtum-Sanchez, 18, looks like a typical teenager: short with spiked, black hair, thin, jeans, sweatshirt and running shoes. But two years ago, he couldn't speak English. And he had never looked through a microscope.

Ajtum-Sanchez came to this country two years ago from Guatemala. His father, Daniel Ajtum, a farm worker, wanted his son to be educated in the United States. Ajtum Sanchez was sent to live with his cousins in north Portland. He will be senior at Roosevelt High School this fall.

He learned about different opportunities for high schoolers during an OHSU educational tour last school year. He also met Pam Racansky, M.A., program coordinator for the Center for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs that day. Ajtum-Sanchez applied to be part of the OHSU CURE

Project, a joint program of the OHSU Cancer Institute and CeDMA. He and seven other diverse and academically successful students were accepted. They will be working in OHSU labs through



Student Angel Ajtum-Sanchez (striped shirt, center) poses with his summer classmates learning about health careers at Oregon Health and Science University.

Aug. 19. The students are paid, which helps Ajtum-Sanchez because he has to support himself.

"I am so excited to work in this lab. It is so wonderful. I am also so excited to be working with my peers because they help me so much. They are magnificent people.

I am glad and proud to part of the CURE project. I am learning a lot about cloning RNA and DNA. My dad is so proud of me. He said he didn't know how I would do here. Now he says I am doing a great job. One thing that helped me so much has been my desire to study."

"We have a lot of hard-working students that we come in contact with during the year. But we noticed that Angel has this presence about him from the first time we met him. He's always sincerely interested and always desires to learn more to further his career interests. Besides be-

ing one of the nicest people I know, Angel is one of the most hard working and dedicated. I know he is going to be successful in his life and career and bring that experience and knowledge back to his community," Racansky said.

Ajtum-Sanchez wants to become a physician to help people suffering from disease here and in his native country.

Like a lot of teens he wears different colored elastic wristbands. The purple one signifies Hope for Cancer: "I hope someday someone will find a cure for cancer because I know there are many people who suffer from it."

The black wristband he wears just because he likes it, he said.

The CURE Project is a summer program designed to offer research experience to a selected group of Oregon high school juniors from socially and economically disadvantaged populations from the Portland-metropolitan area. The long-term goal of this program is to increase participation of underserved and minority students in biomedical research and other health-related programs. Students will work in research laboratories under the guidance of an OHSU scientist conducting cancer research for a minimum of eight weeks. They are expected to create two formal reports, one on their mentors work and another on their own research.

In addition to their own lab work, students will attend weekly seminars on a range of scientific and ethical issues in various areas of biomedical research.

There are about 150 students in various programs or just working with an OHSU mentor.

Allstate Names Latest Local Representative

Wendy Lee-Kano is among an elite group of Allstate insurance agents who recently earned the "Personal Financial Representative" title. Lee-Kano will now be able to offer her customers variable annuity and variable life and mutual fund products, in addition to auto, homeowner and traditional life insurance products.

Lee-Kano received the Personal Financial Representative title after passing the NASD Se-



Wendy Lee-Kano

ries 6 and Series 63 securities license exams and completing an extensive Allstate training curriculum. She is appointed with the registered broker-dealer Allstate Financial Services, L.L.C.

"Planning for the future is just as important as protecting yourself against a loss, which insurance is designed to do," Lee-Kano said.

To reach Lee-Kano, call 503-620-1616.

Minority Ph.D Support Shrinking

According to a new study by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, only seven percent of Ph.D. recipients in 2003 were black or Hispanic, while nearly a third of all Americans in the age group typically awarded the degrees were.

Diversity.com reports that study suggests that increasing diversity on faculties will become all the more difficult because financial support for minority students in Ph.D. pro-

grams is shrinking.

"The Ph.D.'s who lead the way of the world of thought and discoveries are far more monochromatic than the population, said Robert Weisbuch, the foundations president.

Weisbuch said roughly one in four Americans are black or Hispanic, but only one out of nine earned a Ph.D.

"The fact remains that doctoral programs have made significantly

less progress in diversifying than have business and government," he said.

The report also noted another problem. Too many black and Hispanic students who do earn Ph.D.'s tend to specialize in areas like education. For example, while blacks make up 6.6 percent of all Americans awarded Ph.D.'s, they make up 14 percent of all students who received Ph.D.'s in education.

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