

# The NICHD Connection

## July 2016

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## Interesting Opportunity: The NICHD Green Team

By *Ajay Sharma, PhD and Mahua Mukhopadhyay, PhD*

The NICHD Green Team typically organizes two events each calendar year: the Earth Day event in April and the America Recycles Day event in November. The volunteer team comprises both intramural and extramural staff of NICHD. As extramural (Dr. Mukhopadhyay) and intramural (Dr. Sharma) representatives, together we co-chair the team. Other volunteers include Helen Huang (Scientific Review Specialist), Deborah Henken (Program Officer), Jacqueline Lancaster (in the Extramural Administrative Office), Debbie Clay (in the Office of Science Policy, Analysis and Communication), Lynne Holtzclaw (Intramural Senior Research Assistant) and a number of postdoctoral fellow volunteers from intramural NICHD.

### EARTH DAY CELEBRATION/TAKE YOUR CHILD TO WORK DAY

We participate in this event to educate children who come to the NIH with their parents for the Take Your Child to Work Day activities. Over the years, we have distributed flower, vegetable, and herb seeds to children so that they can grow plants in their own homes. This program has been very successful, as it gives children an opportunity to see plants growing over time and to enjoy fresh produce grown in their own garden or containers.

For children and adults, our team, with certified Master Gardener Rochelle Kithcart from NIDDK, gives demonstrations on making compost from kitchen waste, such as unused vegetables, fruit peel, eggshells, and other compostable materials. This is one of the best practices to reduce waste and enrich soil for a better garden, rather than throwing good stuff into the landfill.

We get lots of questions from kids and their parents about growing flowers and vegetables, such as: What type of soil should be used? How often I should water the plants? Or, how much sunlight is needed? This year, we had over 400 kids at our booths. The high attendance shows that kids and their parents are interested in learning about "green" activities. For our volunteers, it is a perfect opportunity to get involved in our community, share knowledge with our NIH colleagues, and instill interest in the younger generation about our connection with the environment and nature. The best part of the Earth Day program is to see the glowing smiles on the faces of children and their parents.

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## Letter from the Editor

Ongoing political debates around the world have highlighted an important concept. Sometimes people make decisions based on strongly held beliefs, and not necessarily on facts. We are due to make a few decisions of our own this year—decisions that may affect funding for basic science. How do we, as scientists and science communicators, ensure that the general public understands the importance of biomedical research?

We can do what we do best. Talk about science.

As people working in a Federal agency, we have to be careful not to engage in political or policy activities (check with the Ethics Office). But by attending the next NIH poster day, joining an outreach group on campus, or talking about your research with nonscientists, it will remind those around you what you do and why you do it. Plus, you'll have the added benefit of networking while doing something you enjoy.

Take a look at our **“Interesting Opportunity” column** this month, where Drs. Ajay Sharma and Mahua Mukhopadhyay discuss various activities of the NICHD Green Team. The group provides an exciting way to interact with the public. For fellows who are thinking about next career moves, the Green Team's members come from scientific review, administration, science policy, research, and more. Talk about a networking opportunity!

You'll find that getting involved is a common ingredient in recipes for success. Check out the top three questions and answers from the **2016 annual retreat round table career discussions**, where several former fellows highlight the activities that helped them find their current positions. Following the Q&As, you'll find several award announcements, made possible by fellows participating in our **communication competition**, **mentoring activities**, and **NIH Poster Day**.

So, how do you want to get involved?

Your Editor in Chief,  
Shana R. Spindler, PhD

Please send questions, comments, and ideas to **[Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com)**.

## Interesting Opportunity: The NICHD Green Team (continued from page 1)

### AMERICA RECYCLES DAY

The NICHD Green Team celebrates America Recycles Day in the second or third week of November. The team has been proactive in inviting the Montgomery County Recycling representative, Paul Gatons, to educate NICHD staff on county recycling programs. In the past, we've organized oral presentation for the extramural staff and set up display tables to distribute informational pamphlets and recycling and composting bins. Our major activity for America Recycles Day has been to provide NICHD extramural staff with a yearly opportunity to recycle various office items. These include non-accountable government electronics, toner and ink cartridges, empty binders and notebooks, batteries, small appliances, cell phones, eyeglasses, and other similar items.

This year, the NICHD Green Team provided additional help beyond the two yearly events. The team helped organize a large-scale, two-month recycling event to help staff clean up offices in preparation for relocation to a new office building in Rockledge, Bethesda. This event allowed NICHD to donate a large amount of unused office supplies and books to local schools and libraries—a great bonus for our community!

For more information about the NICHD Green Team, please contact Ajay Sharma ([sharmaaj@mail.nih.gov](mailto:sharmaaj@mail.nih.gov)) or Mahua Mukhopadhyay ([mukhopam@mail.nih.gov](mailto:mukhopam@mail.nih.gov)).



The NICHD Green Team at Earth Day events in 2016 (top, middle) and 2015 (bottom). Photos by Jeremy Swan.

## So What's It Like Being a...? 2016 Career Round Table Recaps

**ELIZABETH (LIBBY) BARKSDALE, PHD**  
SCIENCE POLICY ANALYST

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### WHAT I DO

I keep track of proposed regulations emanating from various government agencies that could affect scientific researchers and/or the conduct of science. I then work with my policy subcommittees to formulate responses either in support of or against the proposals (sometimes a combination of the two).

### FUN FACT

I like really big dogs; right now I have a one-year-old puppy that weighs over 120 pounds!

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

*Do you need an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship to get a job in science policy?*

No. The AAAS and other policy fellowships are great, resume-boosting experiences, but they are absolutely not necessary for getting a job. What you do need are effective communication skills—both written and oral—a demonstrated interest, and preferably, experience in science policy, as well as demonstrated leadership abilities. Interestingly, the same skills and experiences that will help you get a job will also help you get the AAAS Fellowship, so apply for jobs and fellowships concurrently and see what works out!

*How did you transition from the bench to your job?*

I started out looking for policy experience. I joined the Science Policy Discussion Group and applied for (and eventually got) a detail I saw advertised in Lori Conlan's newsletter [OITE]. I sought out writing opportunities, writing up sessions from the Fellows' Retreat for *The NICHD Connection* and summarizing other meetings and

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 4)

presentations for other NIH publications. I got involved in FelCom subcommittees, serving on the Career Development Subcommittee and co-chairing the Mentoring Subcommittee. And finally, I put myself out there. I started going on informational interviews, building a network of contacts within the science policy world that benefitted me (by means of name dropping) at job interviews.

***What is the one thing I can do now that would most benefit me in my own job search?***

Writing! Well, actually, it's a tie: writing and networking. In just about any job outside of being a PI you will need to write for a nonscientific audience. Get practice now. There's an abundance of opportunities and people to coach you through the writing and editing process at NICHD and NIH. The bigger your portfolio the better off you'll be heading into interviews.

Networking, which sounds off-putting to many scientists (myself included), isn't as hard as you might think. Setting up informational interviews allows you to talk one-on-one with people, who will often give you more people to contact. While the purpose of informational interviews is not to ask for a job, should a position open up in an organization where you've made contacts you'll have the benefit of name recognition when you apply. And, you might get an early "heads up" before a position is officially announced!

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps *(continued from page 5)*

**MELISSA CUNNINGHAM, PhD**  
PROGRAM MANAGER

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### WHAT I DO

As the Program Manager for a government funding agency, I am responsible for leading an integrated product team and overseeing all aspects of the program cycle. Throughout the year, I assist with setting the annual vision of the program, the development and release of program announcements for new funding opportunities, oversight of the peer and programmatic review process, and I lead efforts to evaluate the outcomes of the research we have funded and communicate those outcomes to the broader scientific community and the general public.

### FUN FACT

In my free time, I love to travel and have been fortunate to visit 21 countries outside of the United States. Someday I hope to be able to say I've seen the most of the world!

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

*What did you do to gain additional work experience related to grants administration?*

NIH has a lot of internal opportunities to get involved in various working groups or committees where you can gain additional experience that would be useful in applying for jobs away from the bench. I volunteered to serve on the planning committee for the NICHD Fellows Retreat, which provided me experience with organizing a meeting, planning an agenda, and recruiting speakers. My interactions with the staff in the NICHD Office of Education during my service on the retreat committee led me to discover another avenue for gaining work experience—establishing a work detail (i.e., internship) within another office at NIH. This ended up being not only a great experience for me to feel confident in my choice of a future career path, but also a great addition to my resume to show my interest and additional skills directly related to grants administration and program management.

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 6)

### *How did you set up a work detail at NIH to gain experience outside the lab?*

The NICHD Office of Education helped guide me in getting the detail set up, and aligning me with the right experience/office that would put me on the right path for my next career move. After learning about the detail opportunity, the first step was to talk to my PI about my interest in pursuing a detail, to get approval.

Your PIs will still be supporting your salary while you are spending a significant amount of time outside the lab, so you want to make sure they know you are still committed to fulfilling your obligations as a postdoctoral researcher. I was fortunate to have a supportive PI who knew I was interested in pursuing a career outside of the lab and supported my decision to apply for a detail.

Next, I filled out a brief application, and the Office of Education helped me find an office in the NICHD Extramural Research Office that was willing to mentor me and have me assist with their day-to-day activities.

### *How can I tailor my resume to showcase skills that would make me a good candidate for a grants administration/program management position?*

Of course it helps to have specific work experience that you can put on your resume that is directly related to the position you are applying for. However, there are ways to take many of the activities and responsibilities you have at the bench and find creative ways to rephrase those activities to align with the type of skills and experience that another job outside the lab would be looking for. For example, if your lab has summer or postbac students that you have mentored, you can use this as an example of your management skills and ability to delegate and oversee tasks to help keep a project moving forward. These skills are useful when you are looking at a management position. It's all about understanding what the recruiting agency is looking for in a qualified candidate, and tailoring your resume to show how your work experiences, whether in or out of the lab, have given you the skills and foundation to be successful at that job.

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 7)

**THOMAS MILLER, PHD**  
SCIENTIST I AT MESO SCALE DIAGNOSTICS, LLC. (MSD)

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### WHAT I DO

I have worked within the Clinical and Biodefense Department (CBD) at MSD for about one year now. I perform research and development work creating, optimizing, and validating immunoassays.

### FUN FACT

I got into research after spending three summers in the Caribbean doing behavioral research with fish as an undergraduate.

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

*What does your typical day look like?*

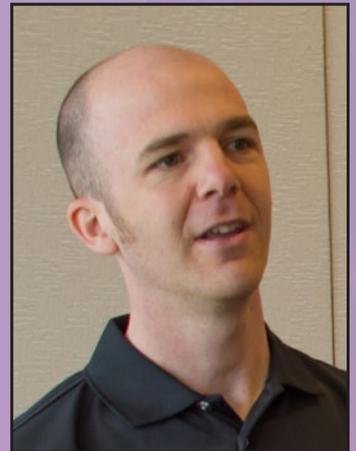
I would say that on average, two to three days per week are spent in the lab doing bench work. Much of the remainder of my time is spent writing up the results or planning new experiments. About three to five hours a week are spent in meetings talking about everyone's results or interacting with other parts of the company (i.e. manufacturing and marketing). Generally speaking, most days are "eight to five" and only sporadically do we have deadlines leading to longer days.

*How much freedom do you have in directing projects and pursuing interesting topics?*

Within CBD at MSD, we are expected to pursue all lines of research uncovered from previous findings that are relevant to the company and might further assay development. We are encouraged to think proactively and be inventors. If a topic really piques our interest it is possible to write a grant and pursue that avenue. We present our findings at relevant scientific conferences and have collaborations leading to publications in addition to patent applications.

*How important is it to know someone in the company to get a job?*

In my personal opinion, it really helps to network early and often. With so many people blanketing HR departments with applications, having someone at the company who can pass your resume off to the HR department directly at least ensures someone looks at it. That is certainly by no means guaranteeing a job, but it helps get over the first hurdle. I did not know anyone prior to applying to MSD, so clearly it is not necessary.



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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 8)

**RAMONA NEUNUEBEL, PHD**  
TENURE-TRACK ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

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### WHAT I DO

I am a tenure-track assistant professor in Microbiology at the University of Delaware. My group studies the molecular tricks that bacterial pathogens use to replicate in human cells.

### FUN FACT

I was a flute player and back-up vocalist in a folk band for a couple of years in college.

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

***When should you start preparing your application for a tenure-track position?***

Most of the applications are due September through December. With this in mind, don't wait later than March to start putting your package together. The most time-consuming part in preparing your application will be your research statement. You need to distance yourself from the research your advisor is currently doing. This is not necessarily an easy task. You want to strike a nice balance between using your expertise in a specific area of research and outlining an exciting future research plan. I would recommend starting to think about your future research about a year in advance.

***When will you hear back about the committee's decision after your interview?***

This time span depends on several factors and can be quite wide. If the search committee is planning to hire just one candidate, they will typically interview four to six candidates, which can take two to six weeks to complete depending on the availability of all candidates for the interviews. Offer letters will go out only after all the candidates have been interviewed, the department

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps *(continued from page 9)*

has voted on the ranking of the candidates, and the Dean has signed off on the offer letter. If this process went smoothly and you were their top candidate, you would get an initial offer letter about one to two months after all interviews have been completed. At the other end of the spectrum, it could be as long as five to six months. You can always email and ask if you are still being considered.

***I don't have a lot of experience teaching; will this reflect negatively on my application to an R1 university?***

The short answer is most likely not. If you are applying for a tenure-track position at an R1 university, your research load will be at least 65 percent. However, the teaching component is also very important in your tenure decision. The committee anticipates that although you may not be the greatest teacher in the first year of your job, you will likely improve by the time tenure rolls around. The committee's assessment of your teaching abilities is mostly based on your job talk and your chalk talk. They will be looking for how well you explain difficult concepts, your interaction with the audience when you answer questions, your ability to inspire excitement about your research and your future plan, your openness to new ideas, and your overall presence.

***(continued on page 11)***

## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 10)

**MARGARITO ROJAS, PhD**  
SENIOR SCIENTIST AT THERMO FISHER SCIENTIFIC

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### WHAT I DO

In my current job, I develop new cell culture media and feeds for bio-production, and I implement new processes for vaccine production.

### FUN FACT

I am freezing all the time, especially where I live now [New York State].

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

*How long did you spend looking for a job in industry, and how many applications did you send?*

First, I spent two months looking for a job in industry and did not receive any phone calls. At that point, I did not have my green card (GC) or employment authorization document (EAD). I heard that companies only hire people who are American citizens or GC or EAD holders, and do not hire people who require sponsorship to get a GC. So, my guess is that the recruiters did not even look at my resume. Then, I applied to get a GC and an EAD under the National Interest Waiver category. Under this category, I did not require a sponsor or job offer, but it was a long and costly process.

If you are interested in applying for a GC, I highly recommend checking this website: [www.wegreened.com](http://www.wegreened.com). After I received my EAD, I spent another 10 months looking for a job, sending more than 1000 applications. I received between 70 to 80 phone interviews, and I was invited for three on-site interviews. I only received one job offer. Finally, three months after I was hired, I received my GC.

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps

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*Was industry your first option, and do you feel secure in your current position?*

No, I actually submitted five faculty job applications, and I received two offers. Nevertheless, during the application process, I realized that becoming a professor was not what I wanted. Becoming a university professor means that you will have your own lab where you will be able to implement your own research projects, but it also means that you will spend a lot of time teaching, mentoring students, applying for grants, and reviewing papers and theses, among other university activities. In my opinion, it is like having two jobs but only one salary. I really admire people who want to pursue a career in academia, because they have to sacrifice a lot for their love of science, but that was just not for me.

I've loved science since I was a kid, but at the end of the day, doing science is my job not my life. In my current position, I usually work 40 hours per week. Some companies pay overtime, which is not the case for me, but I am happy where I am because it is completely weird if I have to work overtime or weekends, and it is much less stressful. Furthermore, I have the satisfaction of knowing that my job is directly applied to the production of vaccines that save lives around the world.

In my job, I spend about 50 percent of my time planning and executing experimental research. I spend the rest of my time writing reports, attending meetings and conferences, traveling, and providing technical and scientific support to some pharmaceutical companies in South America. My current stipend and benefits are very competitive, and there are opportunities to be promoted, but of course I have to earn that. I feel secure in my current position because I go to work and usually I do more than I'm supposed to do, so my supervisors are happy with my performance. I have the fortune to work for one of the largest biotech companies in the United States. With small companies, there is always the risk you might lose your job after a few months.

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps (continued from page 12)

### *How did you find your job and how important was your network?*

First, I was determined to find a job in industry no matter what, but I did not know how to start. So, my first step was to attend the Annual NIH Career Symposium and several meetings organized by the Office of Intramural Training and Education. In those meetings, I learned about how to write a resume and start networking. I also learned about websites where I could look for jobs, learned how to negotiate a salary and benefits, and common questions asked by recruiters. I also talked with a lot of people, as it is very important to hear different opinions. These are some of the websites that helped me find a job.

- » <http://www.labsupport.com>
- » <https://www.aerotek.com>
- » <http://www.biospace.com>
- » <http://www.indeed.com>
- » <http://www.greenkeyllc.com>
- » <https://kelly.secure.force.com/CandidateExperience>
- » <https://www.glassdoor.com>

I did not get my job through connections, but I definitely believe that networking is important. For example, during a phone interview I told the recruiter that a friend of mine was working in the same company. The recruiter contacted my friend asking about my qualifications, and next day the recruiter invited me for an on-site interview. Unfortunately, one month later the position was canceled. I found out that this happens a lot in industry. In my current job, three people were hired during the same month that I was, and all three people were recommended by other employees with a close relationship with the hiring manager. So, your connections may help you to get your foot in the door.

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## 2016 Career Round Table Recaps

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**MIHAIL ZILBERMINT, MD**  
DIRECTOR OF ENDOCRINOLOGY, DIABETES AND  
METABOLISM CARE AT SUBURBAN HOSPITAL, BETHESDA, MD

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### WHAT I DO

I provide diabetes consultation to the patients at the hospital and teach endocrinology clinical fellows at this Johns Hopkins Hospital.

### FUN FACT

I played in a rock band in college.

### TOP THREE RETREAT QUESTIONS

*What is important about securing an academic appointment?*

The number of first-author publications (the more, the better).

*How do I continue research while having an industry job?*

Ask your PI about opportunities to continue your research at the NIH/ NICHD and become a **Special Volunteer**. At the NIH, Special Volunteers are individuals who can continue to provide research services for a lab.

*How could I get more clinical exposure?*

Ask your PI if you can shadow a clinician at the NIH.



## Award-Winning Research from 2016 Postbac Poster Day

NIH Postbac Poster Day is a time for our early career trainees to share their research projects with the NIH community. Each year, NICHD postdoctoral fellows select the top three posters, based on the postbac's knowledge of the lab's research, ability to describe the project, and poster design and layout. With the large amount of talent in our postbac population, it's never an easy decision! This year, our three NICHD postbac winners include:

- » Alessandro Albano (Delaney lab)
- » Marci Rosenberg (Chitnis lab)
- » Lauren Wooddell (Suomi lab)

To honor this achievement, *The NICHD Connection* invited the winning postbacs to submit a synopsis of their research. Read below to learn more about their award-winning studies.



### ISOLATED GnRH DEFICIENCY, A PROBLEM WITH PUBERTY By Alessandro Albano

Isolated Gonadotropin-Releasing Hormone (GnRH) Deficiency (IGD) is a family of rare disorders with a population frequency of about 1 in 50,000 individuals. In the brain, GnRH-expressing neurons control the release of several reproductive hormones from the pituitary, but this activity is completely or partially absent with IGD. Without treatment, these individuals have incomplete or absent puberty.

Researchers have already identified 37 pathogenic rare sequence variants (RSVs) in the DNA of patients with IGD. Most of the genes can be divided into two groups: neurodevelopmental genes and neuroendocrine genes.

Mutations in the neurodevelopmental genes affect GnRH neuron development and migration, which causes the Kallmann Syndrome (KS) form of IGD. Because the GnRH neurons develop within the olfactory bulbs, KS patients have absent or a decreased sense of smell. In contrast, mutations in neuroendocrine genes that affect the secretion or action of GnRH typically lead to a form of IGD called Normosmic Idiopathic

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## Award-Winning Research from 2016 Postbac Poster Day *(continued from page 15)*

Hypogonadotropic Hypogonadism. Like its name suggests, individuals with this form have a normal sense of smell.

IGD gene discovery has increased rapidly with the availability of Next Gen Sequencing, and we are using Exome Sequencing to identify RSVs in the known IGD genes in patients enrolled in our genetic study of GnRH-deficient individuals. We filtered the very large number of variants found in the exome data of our patients to determine which of the 37 genes linked to IGD were significant, and we sent those for confirmation by Sanger sequencing. We are also actively using the exome data with other genetic analyses to look for novel genes that may cause these disorders when mutated.

### CHARACTERIZING A CELLULAR COLLISION

*By Marci Rosenberg*

In a period of a mere 24 hours, zebrafish embryos go from a single cell to something remarkably fish-like. During this stretch of rapid development, cells are engaging in all sorts of interesting behaviors, from division to deformation to migration, and ultimately forming tissues with unique shapes and structures. Of particular interest to our lab is a sensory system that is exclusive to aquatic organisms, called the lateral line. In the process of forming the lateral line system, a collection of about 100 cells, known as the posterior lateral line primordium (PLLp), migrates under the skin from head to tail down the trunk of the zebrafish during the second day of development. As it chugs along, the PLLp deposits sensory organs, called neuromasts. These neuromasts help the animal sense water movement over their body surface.

Recent work from our lab has revealed that cells of the PLLp dynamically interact with the overlying skin, which at this stage has two layers, an external layer with periderm cells, and an internal layer

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## Award-Winning Research from 2016 Postbac Poster Day (continued from page 16)

with basal cells. How the PLLp and overlying cells interact and what the significance of such interactions is were not known. By taking time-lapses of transgenic zebrafish with fluorescently labeled basal and PLLp cells with a confocal microscope, I visualized how overlying cells responded to passage of the underlying PLLp. In addition, I characterized how these interactions might be altered following various pharmacological and molecular perturbations.

We found that basal skin cells, and not the periderm, are in direct contact with the dorsal side of the migrating PLLp. Most intriguingly, as the PLLp tunnels underneath these stationary basal cells, the skin cells do not take this assault quietly; instead, they respond with an explosion of filopodial protrusions. Even when challenged with a barrage of perturbations in signaling systems known to be of importance in PLLp development and actin cytoskeleton remodeling, these filopodial protrusions have remained remarkably persistent. Thus far, the only manipulation we've found to quiet this behavior is a complete stalling of the PLLp's migration. Going forward, we intend to determine if the response of the basal cells helps protect them and/or if it contributes to effective passage of the PLLp.

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## Award-Winning Research from 2016 Postbac Poster Day

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### WHO'S THAT? FACIAL PREFERENCES IN TUFTED CAPUCHINS By Lauren Wooddell

People are attracted to symmetrical faces. We find them attractive because they potentially indicate developmental stability and health; we should therefore select symmetrical individuals as sexual partners to ensure offspring survival. What about other animals? If there is an evolutionary advantage to symmetry, then they too should find facial symmetry attractive. We sought to investigate this by studying tufted capuchin monkeys, which display both female and male mate choice.

In our study, we displayed images of humans, capuchins, and sheep to tufted capuchins. Each individual stimulus had two components: a perfectly symmetrical version and the original, slightly asymmetrical version. We then examined how long the monkeys looked at each image, with the hypothesis that male capuchins should look longer at symmetrical female capuchins, and female capuchins should look longer at male symmetrical capuchins. We predicted no preferences for symmetrical human or sheep faces since these stimuli are not relevant to reproductive success.

Surprisingly, we found that female monkeys had no preference for symmetry in any species. Male monkeys only oriented towards the symmetrical faces for other male capuchins. How do we explain these findings?

Overall males were more vigilant and displayed threatening gestures to other male capuchins compared to any other species. Previous studies have shown that in macaques, symmetry relates to canine size and fighting abilities. We therefore speculate that male monkeys were orienting towards the male capuchins to assess their competitive ability, and facial symmetry may be an important indicator of body condition in male-male competition. As for the females, none were ovulating during the study, and preference for symmetry peaks during ovulation in humans.

Our research indicates that facial symmetry may be an important indicator of intrasexual selection, in addition to the previously studied intersexual selection. Facial symmetry may be attractive, but it can also be intimidating.



## Our 2016 Mentors of the Year Awardees

The NICHD Mentor of the Year Award is an opportunity to recognize individuals whose mentoring has made a difference in someone's life at the NIH. The two mentoring award categories are fellows and investigators. Nominations were invited from all trainee groups in NICHD, and each nominator had to write a statement, on which the selection committee based its decisions. The selection committee included NICHD clinical and postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, and postbac fellows.

For the fellow mentoring award, the three finalists included:

- » *Dr. Amanda Dettmer*, nominated by a postbac fellow, Lauren Wooddell
- » *Dr. Shlomo Krispin*, nominated by a postbac fellow, Margaret Burns
- » *Dr. Amy Palin*, nominated by a postbac fellow, Miles Oliva

***The 2016 Fellow Mentor of the Year winner is DR. SHLOMO KRISPIN.***

Excerpts from Dr. Krispin's nomination:

“Through my past year at NIH, he has provided an excellent model of how to be a successful scientist, coworker, and parent. I believe that he exemplifies the mentorship role of a postdoctoral fellow at the NIH.

My experience as a postbac has been shaped by his support and guidance. This has been crucial in my development as a scientist because he encourages me to experience the entire research process firsthand.

He has always made my training a priority, and mistakes are treated as learning experiences, to inform our next experiment, and not a loss of time.

He provides a great example of how work/life balance requires commitment and flexibility. I aspire to be both a researcher and a parent, and I hope to find the balance he has displayed. He is a hardworking and compassionate mentor whose example I hope to emulate in my career. He has taught me important life skills in and outside of the lab and I am grateful to be a student of his.

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## Our 2016 Mentors of the Year Awardees Announced

*(continued from page 19)*

For the investigator award, there were three finalists for this award:

- » *Dr. Julian Lui (Staff Scientist)*, nominated by a postbac fellow, Michal Ad
- » *Dr. Mary Dasso*, nominated by a postdoctoral fellow, Saroj Regmi
- » *Dr. Annika Paukner (Staff Scientist)*, nominated by a postbac fellow, Emily Slonecker

**The 2016 Investigator Mentor of the Year winner is DR. JULIAN LUI.**

Excerpts from Dr. Lui's nomination:

“His goals were for me to develop an understanding of the scientific process, perform a wide literature search, and see an experiment through from start to finish. Because of his patience, love of teaching, and passion for science, I really feel that he used this experience to teach me many important skills needed to design an experiment.

Another area I feel that he excels in is his role as a leader. He has played a large role in unifying all of the research group members. And he stresses communication beyond our scientific work, and has created a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere in our lab.

Overall, he has helped guide me on the path to becoming a very well rounded scientist, and I believe that my professional growth under his guidance will aid me in my future studies as a medical student, as well as my work as a researcher.



## July Announcements

### NICHD POSTDOC DR. ALEX SZATMARY PLACES THIRD IN TmT COMPETITION

During the third annual Three-minute-Talk (TmT) competition on June 14, thirteen intramural NICHD, NHGRI, and NIDCR postdoc fellows and graduate students competed to be the first-, second-, or third-place winner. The NICHD finalists and top three winners will receive travel/training support and their talk will be professionally produced for a video clip.

Our very own Alex Szatmary, a postdoctoral fellow in the Nossal lab, impressed the judges with his research talk on the chemical signals of white blood cells. His wonderful presentation and clear slide earned him third place among all of the 2016 TmT speakers.

Congratulations to Dr. Szatmary and to all of our NICHD TmT finalists:

- » Afrouz Anderson – Gandjbakhche lab
- » Miranda Broadney – Yanovski lab
- » Courtney Kurtyka – DePamphilis lab
- » Parmit Singh – Levin lab
- » Jeremy Weaver – Storz lab

You all did a great job!

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*Dr. Szatmary at the 2016  
Fellows Retreat*



## July Announcements (continued from page 21)

### SAVE THE DATE: SPEAKING ABOUT SCIENCE, AUGUST 8

Monday, August 8, 10 AM – 12 PM

Speaking about Science: Giving Scientific Talks  
with Scott Morgan

Up to 25 participants

Speaking about Science is a highly interactive workshop that introduces a 9-step preparation process to prepare a clear and engaging talk for a variety of scientific audiences. Topics include: the presentation of data, identifying the theme and focus, how to create effective visual aids, and how to begin and end a talk.

### SEEKING NATIONAL PARK PICS FOR LIFE OUTSIDE LAB COLUMN

Have you been to a national park recently? We are seeking pictures of NICHD fellows at national parks (international photos welcome!) for an upcoming issue of the newsletter. Please send your submissions to [Shana.Spindler@gmail.com](mailto:Shana.Spindler@gmail.com), including your name, park, and date the photo was taken.

### NEW PROGRAM HELPS FELLOWS WITH FINANCIAL GOALS

NIH Federal Credit Union's (NIHFCU) **Fellows Advantage Program**, created in partnership with **FAES**, is designed to provide Fellows with:

- » Easy access to needed credit and banking solutions at favorable rates and terms
- » Tools and resources to rapidly build a positive credit profile in the U.S.
- » Comprehensive financial education to help reach personal financial goals

The Fellows Advantage Program combines a variety of products and services, banking conveniences, and financial education to assist fellows while they are at NIH and beyond.

Products and services include Visa credit cards, auto loans, mortgages, and other loans. The NIHFCU offers convenient checking account options with a range of features, benefits, and banking conveniences. In addition, financial education opportunities are available.

To learn more about the Fellows Advantage Program, visit [nihfcu.org/Fellows](http://nihfcu.org/Fellows), stop by any NIHFCU Branch, or call 1-800-877-6440.

## July Events

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 13, 11 AM (NEW DATE!)

Grant Writers! Informational Session for Prospective PRAT Applicants:  
Postdoctoral Fellowships at the NIH  
Building 31, Room 2A48

The Postdoctoral Research Associate (PRAT) Program awards postdoctoral fellowships within the NIH Intramural Research Program. In addition to professional development activities, it provides recipients with research training in all areas supported by NIGMS. These areas include but are not limited to cell biology, biophysics, genetics, developmental biology, pharmacology, physiology, biological chemistry, computational biology, technology development, and bioinformatics.

Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents and have no more than 2 years of postdoctoral experience at NIH by the time of appointment to the PRAT program.

The submission deadline is **October 3, 2016**, and postdoc applicants must now apply through the NIH F12 funding mechanism. If you are planning to apply this year, the Office of Education is offering a session to discuss in detail how to prepare for the application submission, and more importantly, provide you with some useful documents.

If you would like to register, please email Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov).

### THURSDAY, JULY 14, 8:45 AM – 3:30 PM

NIH Graduate and Professional School Fair  
Bethesda Campus  
For more information: [https://www.training.nih.gov/gp\\_fair](https://www.training.nih.gov/gp_fair)

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## July Events

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### THURSDAY, JULY 28, 3:30 – 4:30 PM

NICHD Advisory Committee Meeting for the Office of Education

The advisory committee works with the NICHD Office of Education to develop and initiate academic support programs for the institute. Some potential topics for our committee are how to:

- » Increase the participation for training activities
- » Expose fellows to various careers in science
- » Identify teaching opportunities, and internal and external research funding mechanisms
- » Establish a structure for sharing scientific and career resources within the institute

Please contact Yvette Pittman at [yvette.pittman@nih.gov](mailto:yvette.pittman@nih.gov) if you are interested in joining the committee.

### FRIDAY JULY 29, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Summer Poster Day

Natcher Conference Center (Building 45)

For more information: [https://www.training.nih.gov/summer\\_poster\\_day](https://www.training.nih.gov/summer_poster_day)

