

Up-Coming Middle & High School Epidemiology Education Events

June 23-25, 2006 – Poster session on the Epidemiology Education Movement June 23 and lunch time brown bag on June 24, at the Congress of Epidemiology 2006 in Seattle, WA (See item above.)

November 7, 2006 – Roundtable presentation entitled “Epidemiology Education Movement” at the 134th Annual Meeting & Exposition (November 4-8, 2006) in Boston, MA

“Taking Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day” at ExxonMobil

A unique way to support the teaching of epidemiology is to have epidemiologists who work for business groups introduce the topic when children visit their parents at work. This was done by a member of the Movement during a recent “Taking Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day” at ExxonMobil’s Research and Engineering site in Annandale, New Jersey. One of the “teaching stops” during the day was “hands on” experience where students from ages 10 to 16 participated in generating hypotheses based on the descriptive epidemiology of fictitious “diseases” that some of them had “caught.” Although many of the children had not heard of epidemiology before, they joined in eagerly as “disease detectives.”



BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE

In April, over 150 educators from across North America converged on Chicago to attend the BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE, held in conjunction with the BIO conference. The conference attendance was approximately 15,000!

The Movement contributed via the education seminars and ‘spread the word’ of the Movement through countless one-on-one discussions. There were considerable talk about the various programs and activities available on

the Movement website and how this could be potentially used to complement existing biotechnology-related curriculum. While few of the educators were familiar with the Movement at first, the prospect of integrating epidemiology into their respective programs was appealing after a few minutes with us.

We hope to disseminate material to all the educators who were affiliated with the BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE and keep ‘spreading the word’.

Young Epidemiology Scholarship (YES) Competition

In a world where public health issues are prevalent and their solutions often elusive, the Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition has sparked the interest of high school students across the nation. About 700 high school juniors and seniors entered research projects in the 2005-06 YES Competition. Their enthusiasm is best summed up by Aman Prasad, an 18-year-old senior from Pocatello, Idaho. “I learned that when you’re motivated to try something new, to build bridges with your ideas, there really is no limit to what you can accomplish,” Prasad says.

Prasad and Natalia Nazarewicz of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, were the co-winners of the third annual YES Competition, and both received a \$50,000 college scholarship. Prasad conducted a study of high school students that he says suggests that physical activity could mitigate some of the negative affects of minor mood disorders. Nazarewicz surveyed more than 1,000 high school students in her area and found that one in four reported deliberately harming themselves in response to stress.

The two winners were among 60 regional finalists who were chosen from the 700 entrants to come to Washington, D.C. for the final rounds of competition, which were held in April. Over the course of a weekend, the finalists presented their research to a panel of judges that

included some of the nation’s top epidemiologists and public health officials as well as high school teachers and curriculum developers.

YES competitors had to develop projects in which each of them identified a health problem, gathered data about that problem, and addressed the problem based on the data. The 60 finalists presented research on a variety of important topics, such as Avian flu, the correlation between asthma and obesity, and the effects of exposure to Hurricane Katrina.

The YES Competition is a collaborative effort, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and administered by the College Board. “We could not be prouder of the initiative, talent, and hard work these students have displayed during this competition. We know they are going to be difference makers, dedicated to improving the lives of others,” says Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Each year, the YES Competition awards nearly \$460,000 in college scholarships to 120 students.

This year’s top twelve awards are identified at http://www.collegeboard.com/yes/fs/winners_0506_about.html

Comments?

Please let us know if you have any questions or comments about the Movement or our website,

If you want to suggest items for the Newsletter or just want to share your thoughts.

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Visit Our Website

Go to www.EpiEdMovement.org for a look at our website. You will find links on the site for you to communicate with us.

New Epidemiology Education List Serve

We recently added a Forum for discussion of Epi Ed Movement topics to the web site. A link to the Forum can be found on all pages of the website. You may become a member of the group by clicking on the link to enter the Forum, selecting the button that says "Join

epi_ed_movement.", and then filling out a short form. Enter the password "emptycell" (all lower case) where required. We encourage you to join us with your questions and comments.

Congress of Epidemiology 2006

Plans are in place for a lunch time "Brown Bag" for the Epidemiology Education Movement, to take place during the upcoming Congress of Epidemiology 2006 in Seattle, Washington. We are getting together at 12 noon on Saturday, June 24, in the room called Olympia. There will be plenty of seating, so bring your lunch and come

meet some of the people involved in the Movement. We will share information about current activities in epidemiology education in grades 6-12 and will ask for your feedback and for your ideas on how you and others might want to participate in the effort. Also, on the day before (Friday June 23), the Movement will have a poster in Poster Session # 3.

Homeschooling Workshops

More than 100 homeschooling parents and their children participated in Detectives in the Classroom workshops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in April. To the best of our knowledge, this was the first time any member of the Movement addressed this audience. Homeschooling parents do not need permission from an educational bureaucracy in order to make changes in their children's curriculum. In addition homeschooling parents participate in cooperatives where a number of students get together and a homeschooling parent assumes responsibility for teaching the lessons. Workshop

participants were introduced to the educational materials at the EXCITE and YES web sites which are also attractive to homeschoolers because of their ties to the Science Olympiad and the YES Competition and the stimuli and focus these events provide. Patti Mahaney, homeschooling consultant, reported, "FYI - I have organized a good number of HS activities in the last few years and this is the first one that people were asking for more before it even started. Obviously the subject is one of interest and is meeting a need for the homeschool community."