

■ teen f.y.i.

By Angela Geiser

Local Teens Win Prizes for Projects

The Bay Area is home to great talent and generosity, and the teenage population is no exception. Six Bay Area teens recently

received recognition in four different contests for contributions to science and philanthropy. Here are their stories:



Mythri Ambatipudi

Mythri Ambatipudi, 13, of San Jose was one of 10 national finalists in the Young Scientist Challenge for her research on advanced glycation end-products (AGEs), the root causes of many life-threatening diseases including Alzheimer's, cancer and heart disease.

Mythri tested nine common food ingredients in a lab to measure their effect on AGE formation and found that ascorbic acid, blueberries and resveratrol were the best inhibitors.

"By using very natural additives, I have found a breakthrough cure for many deadly diseases," Mythri says in a video describing her research.

Her project earned her a \$1,000 scholarship and an invitation to the awards event in Minneapolis, home of contest sponsor 3M.

Each year, 3M and Discovery Education invite fifth- to eighth-graders nationwide to submit a one- to two-minute video addressing a world need with a scientific solution. For more information, see www.youngscientistchallenge.com.

Two other San Jose teens – **Sadhika Malladi**, 16, and **Daniella Lee**, 17 – meanwhile took top honors for their health-related research in the Google Science Fair.

Sadhika and Daniella were among 18 global finalists out of thousands of contestants in the fair, which invites kids ages 13 to 18 to use science and technology to fix a world problem.

Sadhika and Daniella addressed a major problem for cancer patients and hospitals: the need for the patients to undergo surgery to provide a tissue sample, which hospitals then put through extensive molecular tests to find the best treatment for the patient.

In their research, the girls used a special type of magnetic resonance imaging to analyze a tumor's texture and accurately predicted the best treatment, avoiding the taxing surgery and all the lab tests.

Sadhika, Daniella and the other finalists spent a day at Google in Mountain View, where they got to travel in Google's self-driving cars, and received LEGO and Google goodie bags. For more details, see www.google-sciencefair.com/en/.



Google Science Fair finalists Daniella Lee and Sadhika Malladi.



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Gabrielle Castro

Gabrielle Castro, 18, of San Rafael, and **Susannah Goldberg**, 18, of San Jose, won a different kind of award – the Kohl’s Cares Scholarship for service to the community.

Gabrielle was recognized for her efforts to save the popular radio class at San Rafael High School. She organized a countywide high school band competition to raise funds, and it was such success that she held a second concert, bringing in an additional \$11,000 for her school.

Susannah was honored for creating a Facebook page that helped in the search for a plane that went missing along with five members of a San Jose family. The pilot, Dale Smith, was Susannah’s scripture teacher at her church.

Susannah stepped in to organize volunteers who were searching satellite images on Tomnod.com. For five weeks, she helped searchers reduce overlap and communicate their findings with searchers in Idaho where the plane disappeared. Her Facebook page

gave its 2,000 members a way to support each other and share ideas.

With help from the image searchers, ground searchers ultimately found the wreckage. While there were no survivors, the discovery helped the family gain closure.

Gabrielle and Susannah were among 200 teens who won \$1,000 scholarships this year from Kohl’s Cares. Learn more at www.kohlscorporation.com/CommunityRelations/scholarship.



COURTESY PHOTO

Susannah Goldberg



COURTESY PHOTO

Stefan Lyon with students at one of the schools he has funded in Kenya.

Also recognized for community service is **Stefan Lyon**, 18, of San Francisco, who received \$5,000 as one of 15 national winners of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes.

In third grade, Stefan learned about African children orphaned by AIDS. He told his mom he wanted to build them a school and would raise the money by writing a book about his pet rat, Stitch. He did just that, raising \$30,000 to fund his first school. Since then, Stefan, who lives with a neurological disorder, has written three more books and has traveled twice to Kenya to visit the schools he has funded and to connect with the children there.

He says the kids’ determination inspires him.

“Life can be unfair, and it’s up to us to change that and make a positive difference,”

Stefan says. “You don’t have to be rich, famous or even an adult. You just need to have an idea and act on it.”

The Barron Prize was founded in 2001 by author T.A. Barron and named for his mother. For information, see www.barronprize.org.