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LOCAL COLLEGE STUDENTS COMPLETE SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS AT MASONIC MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY

Research Studies Launch Medical and Health Careers

UTICA, NY – On Thursday, July 28, six undergraduates representing colleges and universities across the Northeast completed the Summer Fellowship Program at the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory (MMRL) in Utica.

The 10-week program gives students hands-on experience working under the direction of MMRL research scientists. Each student is paired with a scientist and over the two and a half months they assist the scientists with tasks such as evaluating potential negative health consequences (side-effects) of new drugs; studying genetic abnormalities that lead to heart disease in young people; and potential beneficial therapies for those with sleep apnea.

“The Summer Fellowship Program is a point of pride among the staff at the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory,” said Dr. Brian Panama, Summer Fellowship Program director. “We are fortunate to have a group of dedicated and highly accomplished scientists doing cutting edge research, but their interest in guiding and cultivating the next generation of students is where we truly shine. And over the years we have seen first-hand the products of our program as many fellows go on to pursue careers in STEM by coming physicians, scientists or engineers.”

For all of the students, the Summer Fellows Program provides “real world” experience in a working research laboratory.

“I am looking forward to attending medical school and becoming a physician,” said Summer Carbone, of New York Mills and a member of the Utica College Class of 2017. “My passion for science and medicine is *very* strong. And I know that taking part in the Summer Fellowship Program at MMRL brings me one step closer to reaching these goals. It has been a privilege to be part of the Fellowship Program.”

Jacob Lux, who attends Mohawk Valley Community College, studied sleep apnea and related cardiac conditions. “Medical research taking place at the laboratory is important work – in the U.S. more than 25 million people are afflicted with sleep apnea – which dramatically increases the likelihood of abnormal heart rhythms. Working side-by-side with the scientists we are helping seek solutions to complex medical conditions, and by sharing our knowledge paving the way for improved health outcomes.”

For over 50 years the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory has mentored and inspired talented undergraduates as they pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The Summer Fellowship program owes its longevity to the many generous sponsors whose gifts or grants have helped to underwrite the cost of the program. Without their financial support, many students would have to choose between gaining valuable experience in the lab and getting a job just to make money for school.

Sponsors for this year's students include: American Heart Association, IBEW Local 43 & NECA, Slocum-Dickson Foundation and Utica Lodge 47, F&AM.

“We have supported the Summer Fellowship Program for several years and we applaud Masonic's efforts to offer this opportunity,” said Patrick H. McNulty, MD, president of the Greater Utica Area Board of Directors, American Heart Association. “The experiences these students receive are invaluable, and if even one of them goes on to become part of the next generation of cardiologists or researchers then we are proud of have played a part in that.”

This year's class of Summer Fellows includes:

- Summer Carbone (Utica College), of New York Mills;
- Suveer Desai (Boston University), of New Hartford;
- Ismaila Ibrahim (SUNY Polytechnic Institute), of Utica;
- Hannah King (SUNY Geneseo), of New York Mills;
- Jacob Lux (Mohawk Valley Community College), of Marcy; and
- Emily Rembetski (Utica College), of Whitesboro.

- Additionally, Elma Sarajlija of Frankfort, a student at Sauquoit High School is working closely with the fellows on a program sponsored by BOCES.

This year's Fellows will join a distinguished group of more than 400 students who have participated in the MMRL Summer Fellowship Program. Please visit www.mmrl.edu to learn more about the Summer Fellowship Program. Applications for next year's Summer Fellowship Program will be available online January 2017.

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About the Masonic Medical Research Laboratory

The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory is a not-for-profit institute founded by the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in the State of New York in 1958 and is dedicated to improving the health and quality of life for all. The Laboratory is also committed to providing education and training to basic scientists, clinical researchers and students who will perpetuate and extend the fight against disease. Please visit www.mmrl.edu to learn more.

