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Press Release: Polish Student Wins World Neuroscience Competition

July, 2018; Berlin, Germany

Future neuroscientists from 25 countries around the world met in Berlin, Germany this week to compete in the Twentieth Anniversary **International Brain Bee (IBB) Championship**. The 2018 IBB Champion is **Piotr Oleksy from Poland**.



First: Piotr Oleksy



Second: Giovanni De Gannes



Third: Huai-Ying Huang

The IBB is a neuroscience competition for young students between 13 to 19 years old. Its purpose is to inspire them to learn about the human brain, apply neuroscience to their daily lives, and motivate them to enter careers in the basic and clinical neurosciences. We need bright young men and women to help treat and find cures for the neurological and psychological disorders affecting millions of people around the world.

Piotr Oleksy, this year's IBB Champion, is 18 years old and from the **Liceum Ogólnokształcące High School in Krakow**. He is interested in studying neurotransmitters and their receptors because he believes molecular neurology is the basis for finding cures for many disorders, such as schizophrenia and depression. His dream is to go to medical school. He also loves good music like Mahler, Glass, and Rachmaninoff, and great works of art from the Art Nouveau period.

Second Place went to 14 year-old **Giovanni De Gannes of Grenada Boys' Secondary School in Grenada, West Indies**. Giovanni appreciates hard work, team cooperation and living a balanced life. He also enjoys developing software, swimming competitively, and playing musical instruments.

Third Place went to **17 year-old Huai-Ying Huang of Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School in London, Ontario, Canada**. She loves playing the piano and oboe, and is starting at McGill University to pursue her dream of becoming a neurologist or a neurosurgeon, not only because she has passion for neuroscience, but because she wants to be able to help people affected by neurological disorders.

Fourth to tenth places went in order of finish to **Mahsa Arman of Iran, Elaine Cheung of Australia, Akhil Kondepudi of the United States, Quintus U-Wei Baptist of Malaysia, Andrei Mitrofan of Romania, Sharon Olago of Kenya, and Alan Li of New Zealand**.

The other competitors came from the following IBB Regions listed alphabetically: **Brazil (Iara Ribeiro Paiva), China (Yuxiao Huang), Egypt (David Mikhael), United Kingdom (Emmanuela Obaro), France (Lilia Evgeniou), Germany (Maria Koryakina), Hong Kong (Bak Yue Chow),**

India (Samyak Vinaykumar Bharwad), Israel (Yonatan Yakubov), Italy (Vito Nicosia), Japan (Tomoaki Okami), Macau (Weng Hou Chang), South Korea (JunSung Park), Ukraine (Lada Isakova), and United Arab Emirates (Jayant Karnan).

The 2018 World IBB Championship was hosted by the **Federation of European Neuroscience Societies**, and supported in part by the **Hertie Foundation**. The Organizing Committee consisted of **Martyna Petrulyte, LaShae Nicholson, Ionut Dumitru, and Julianne McCall**. They were assisted by numerous members of the **German Neuroscience Olympiad**. The Judges were **Prof. Dr. Eero Castrén of the University of Helsinki, Prof. Dr. Leslie Vosshall of Rockefeller University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nicolas Caesar Petersen of the University of Denmark, Prof. Dr. Imre Vida of the Charité Berlin University of Medicine, and Prof. Dr. Paul Bolam of the University of Oxford**. Tour Guides representing the **European Neuroscience Conference of Doctoral Students** were **Boris Bouazza Arostegui, Adriana van Casteren, Margaux Silvestre, and Robert Templaar**. The competition was held at the Charité – Berlin University of Medicine and the FENS conference venue. Social venues included the Reichstag Building, the Charité Medical Museum, and the Olympic Stadium.

The IBB Founder is **Dr. Norbert Myslinski of The University of Maryland, Department of Neural and Pain Sciences** in Baltimore, who says the IBB "Builds better brains to fight brain disorders." In 2018, the IBB was incorporated under the leadership of **the Dana Foundation, the Society for Neuroscience, the American Psychological Association, the Federation of European Neuroscience Societies, and the International Brain Research Organization**.

The Brain Bee competition has three tiers. Worldwide there are about 200 local Chapter competitions, each one involving many schools. The winners of those then compete in their respective Regional (National) championships. The Regional winners then go on to represent their countries in the World Championship. They are tested on their knowledge of the human brain including such topics as intelligence, emotions, memory, sleep, vision, hearing, sensation, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, schizophrenia, addictions and brain research. The competition involves oral tests, a neuroanatomy laboratory exam with real human brains, a neurohistology test, and a patient diagnosis component. The winner receives a monetary award, a research internship, a trophy, and the right to represent the Brain Bee around the world. Second and third place winners also received monetary awards.

In a post Championship survey of the competitors, 100% said the Brain Bee was a valuable experience. Seventy-two percent said that their course of study was influenced by the Brain Bee and was related to neuroscience or psychology. Some careers that the competitors plan to enter are: Neurologist, neuroscientist, neurosurgeon, neurobiologist, neuropharmacologist, computational neuroscientist, neuroecologist, neurobusinessman, and social neuroscience advocate.

The following are some comments from the Regional Champions after the competition:

Canada: "The Brain Bee Program really opened my eyes ... and deepened my passion and understanding for neuroscience. The Brain Bee Experience made me 100% certain that I want to go into the field of neuroscience."

Egypt: "I'm in love with every single aspect of the Program."

Germany: "It opened my mind to the depth of science which I would never have been able to experience in just a normal, regular school program. The Brain Bee Program is the opportunity I

have long been looking for and finally found. It is international, multi-cultural, and open-minded to new ideas and perspectives. It is a collection of the most ambitious world's neuroscientists, who are eager to show their knowledge, and change the world for the better."

Iran: "The IBB is the best experience I've ever had in my life."

Romania: "The Brain Bee has helped me discover myself and made me consider a career in neuroscience. Before I got involved in the Brain Bee, neuroscience was this complicated subject that you needed years to understand even the slightest part of, but once I started studying it for the local competition, I realized that everyone can and should learn about it. This has encouraged me to pursue a career in neuroscience, as I have become completely captivated by the subject."

New Zealand: "The Brain Bee expanded ... my knowledge of the brain. It influenced my future career choice and gave me a new perspective on life. This opened my eyes to an exciting and wonderful field, and gave me a unique, once-in-a-lifetime experience."


Kenya: "It has formed a good basis for my future ... helped raise my awareness about disorders of the brain ... and [enabled me] to interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds with similar interests."

Grenada: "I found the Brain Bee Program to be one of great hospitality and elegant organization. The Brain Bee Experience was certainly an influential one ... that widened my view of the neuroscience field and the surplus of possibilities that it holds for the future of humanity."

Hong Kong: It sparked my interest in the brain like never before ... [gave me] an amazing experience that I will never forget ... and made me fall in love with neuroscience."

For more information contact Astrid Eberhart, IBB Senior Management Advisor, at eberhart.astrid@gmail.com OR your Regional (National) Coordinator.

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