Local Newsmakers

"Ask the experienced rather than the learned.
Arabic proverb

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KarryAnne Belanger, a 2010 graduate of Raymond High School, is working toward her doctorate degree in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX. When finished, she hopes to continue pursuing her interest in asthma research.

While a student at RHS, Belanger was active in the Reach High Scholars Program and attended the Advanced Studies Program at Saint Paul’s School in the summer of 2009. Belanger, whose own hard work and dedication have brought her great rewards, credits Raymond High teachers and Reach High Scholars Program as having supported and encouraged her along the way. “Without the resources and guidance” they provided, she said, “I doubt I would have been accepted to as many great schools as I was. They helped me prepare in many ways such as guiding me to attend St. Paul’s summer program and studying for the SAT’s. In addition, they provided me countless opportunities to actually visit colleges and do interviews that I may not have been able to do otherwise.”

Belanger, who graduated from Wheaton College in 2014 with a BA in Biology and a minor in psychology, has been inducted into several scientific societies and professional organizations, including American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI), Beta Beta Beta National Biological Honor Society, and Sigma Xi.

http://thisweekinraymond.com/raymond-high-graduate-working-... 6/19/2015
As an undergraduate, Belanger received the SURP Institute for Human Infection and Immunity Award for Research Excellence for a summer research project on asthma through the Summer Undergraduate Research Program at University of Texas Medical Branch under the guidance of Dr. Bill T. Ameredes, Associate Professor of Medicine, Biochemistry, and Molecular Biology in the Division of Pulmonary Critical Care and Sleep Medicine Division at UTMB.

The story of how Belanger and Dr. Ameredes first connected reveals as much about Belanger’s initiative and determination as it does about her passion for asthma research. While a student at Raymond High, Belanger took a biotechnology course at Seacoast School of Technology in Exeter, for which she was required to pursue a year-long research project. She designed one, Belanger explained, that was “related to my own personal struggle with not being able to use albuterol inhalers due to a paradoxical response.” In her quest to find a mentor for the project, Belanger discovered the work of Dr. Ameredes.

Undaunted by her own youth or by the many accomplishments of Dr. Ameredes, Belanger took the initiative to write to him and he agreed to be her project mentor. It’s likely that neither of them guessed then that a fearless appeal from a high schooler interested in science would blossom into a collegial, professional collaboration that would last for years.

Belanger, who later “went and worked with Dr. Ameredes for two summers in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program at UTMB,” carried out her award-winning research under his tutelage. Belanger and Ameredes continue to work closely today as he advises her graduate research into asthma while she works toward her joint doctorate degree.

Belanger’s first abstract was submitted and accepted by the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology in February. She presented this data in a poster session at the 2015 AAAAI Annual Meeting (pictured above).

Belanger’s friends in the Raymond area will look forward to following her admirable career path in the years to come.

Belanger’s abstract can be viewed online at:

To learn more about the Reach High Scholars Program, visit its website: http://reachhighscholars.org.