

Genzyme Scholarship Promotes Scientific Inquiry and Education



Catherine McManus explains her Science Fair research project to Genzyme leadership and special guests.

It's never too early in life to start thinking like a scientist. Catherine McManus, Wachusett Regional High School student, asks the incisive questions that form the foundation of innovative scientific thinking. Her research on water pollution caused by erosion earned her the coveted Genzyme Science Award at the 2010 Massachusetts State Science and Engineering Fair (MSSEF), a statewide event hosted by MIT each May.

Catherine presented her project at a reception recently held at Genzyme Center in her honor. The reception was attended by teachers and administrators from Wachusett, family members, MSSEF directors, Museum of Science representatives,

and a number of Genzyme employees including Richard Peters, vice president of Global Medical Affairs, and Rick Mattila, director of Environmental Affairs. After Catherine shared her research, Richard Peters described how Catherine's process of scientific inquiry was similar to that employed by the scientists who discovered uses for one of Genzyme's approved products. The drug failed as a treatment for HIV, but as scientists continued to ask questions, they recognized its value for bone marrow transplants and oncology.

Catherine says that interactions like this one with experts in her field "make me feel like a real scientist." She also stated that one of the reasons she enjoyed participating in the science fair was that she had intelligent conversations with the MSSEF judges, several of whom were Genzyme employees. Winning the Genzyme Award was a dream come true for her. It is the last award to be announced at MSSEF, so it is highly anticipated. "I was just pulling for an award, period," says Catherine. "When they called my name for the Genzyme Award, someone literally had to pull me up from my seat. I didn't believe it!"

The Genzyme Award is the largest that MSSEF gave out at the 2010 Science Fair. It is also the largest scholarship that Genzyme gives to a student. In fact, Genzyme significantly increased this year's overall award to MSSEF so that the student now receives \$10,000 to be used as a college scholarship, the high school receives \$10,000 to develop its science program, and \$5,000 is also awarded to the teacher to further his or her own education. Cora Beth Abel, the executive director of MSSEF, says that the Genzyme Award not only recognizes the excellence of the student's project but also "honors the environment that enabled the student" to succeed. Genzyme also supports the

MSSEF organization and its regional fair network, recognizing the importance of helping MSSEF to keep pace with increasing student interest in science fair programs statewide, up 12% in the last year alone.

In addition to the scholarship money, the student is given a paid summer internship at Genzyme, tailored to his or her specific interests. In this case, Catherine will have the opportunity to work with Genzyme's environmental department. She says that she is excited for the internship and that she believes this award will be pivotal in her future as a scientist.