

People's Genome Celebration Youth Essay Contest

How is the sequencing of the human genome relevant to you?

Winners will join in the People's Genome Celebration activities, June 8, 9 and 10, 2001 in Washington, DC. Award includes travel and lodging.

Sponsored by:



Maternal and Child Health Bureau/Genetics Services Branch



American Society of Human Genetics

- Centers for Disease Control Office of Genetics and Disease Prevention • Holt Associates •
- National Association of Biology Teachers • National Coalition of Health Professional Education in Genetics •
- National Human Genome Research Institute • National Society of Genetic Counselors •
- International Society of Nurses in Genetics •

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People's Genome Celebration Essay Contest

This is an exciting year for genetics! On June 28, 2000, former President Clinton, Dr. Francis Collins of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Dr. Craig Venter of Celera Genomics announced the completion of the human genome's draft sequence. President Clinton emphasized the importance of this achievement, which "tapped the great strengths and insights of the public and private sectors" worldwide. Dr. Collins, representing the public research effort, said, "It's a happy day for the world. It is humbling for me and awe-inspiring to realize that we have caught the first glimpse of our own instruction book..." In addition, Dr. Venter, who represented the private research effort, commented on the historical impact of this incredible scientific accomplishment: "The complexities and wonder of how the inanimate chemicals that are our genetic code give rise to the imponderables of the human spirit should keep poets and philosophers inspired for millenniums."

During the intense race to finish sequencing the genome, all eyes were on the researchers. However, on June 8 – 10, at the *People's Genome Celebration* in Washington, DC, we will recognize it as the genome of all people – regardless of race, culture or ideology. It is the people's genome, ready to reveal important clues to health and disease. As researchers work today to translate these discoveries into medical advances in the 21st century, we can expect fundamental changes in the practice and experience of healthcare. To families living with genetic conditions, genetic medicine represents a huge leap forward in the evolution of disease management and the promotion of health.

The sequencing of the human genome is the greatest scientific story of our time—but most of all, it is a human story. We invite you to write about how this monumental moment in human history is relevant to *you and your community*.

Essay Topic:

How is the sequencing of the human genome relevant to you?

In a 1500-word essay that answers this question, please also:

Use examples to support your thesis. Discuss the impact of sequencing the genome on the general population and on various communities within the US. Consider how this knowledge changes various aspects of life, including two of the following: healthcare in the US and world, family relations, society, ethics or your education. Describe the effects of this knowledge on disenfranchised or marginalized communities.

Conclude your essay by making recommendations to researchers and to the nation's elected leaders to accelerate the translation of science to healthcare, and to improve access to these technologies.

Rules: Essays must be 1,500 words or less, typed and doubled-spaced, with endnotes and a bibliography of sources.

Deadline: Postmarked April 30, 2001

Awards: Top ten winners (three from grades 7 and 8; and seven from grades 9 to 12) and one parent or legal guardian for each will receive transportation to and lodging for the *People's Genome Celebration* in Washington, DC, June 8 – 10, 2001. In addition to all of the public activities, held at the Smithsonian's Museum of Natural History, there will be a special gathering for these youth on June 10.

CONTEST DETAILS

The **People's Genome Celebration Youth Essay Contest** has two steps:

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Step 1 - All essays must be postmarked by **April 30, 2001**. They must arrive in hard copy only. No e-mail submissions will be considered. The team of judges will judge these essays.

Step 2 - The judge's scoring will decide the ten Prize Winners. The ten Prize Winners will be announced and notified on **May 15, 2001**.

JUDGING PROCESS

The People's Genome Celebration Youth Essay Contest uses a blind scoring system. This system is designed to make the process of judging as impartial as possible. The Genetic Alliance removes the names and schools of the students before sending copies of the essays to the judges. The judges read and score each essay individually. The total points for each of the essays are added together, and the essays earning the top 10 highest cumulative points win.

Invited Judges included:

Mei-Ling Chang, MPH, Executive Director, Hui No Ke Ola Pono, Honolulu, HI
Edward Christian, PhD, Chair, Minority Affairs Section, Association of American Medical Colleges
Francis Collins, MD, PhD, Director, National Human Genome Research Institute
Mary Davidson, MSW, Executive Director, Genetic Alliance
Kathleen P. Deignan, PhD, Director, Iona Spirituality Institute
Kathy Frame, Director of Education, National Association of Biology Teachers
Harold Freeman, MD, Director, Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities, NIH
Judy Gobert (Blackfeet), Chair, The American Indian Science & Engineering Society
Tawara Goode, National Center for Cultural Competence
Muin Khoury, Center for Disease Control Office of Genetics and Disease Prevention
Eric Lander, Director, Whitehead Center for Genome Research
Robert Murray, MD, Chairman, Department of Genetics and Human Genetics at Howard University
Vivian Ota Wang, Associate Professor, College of Education, Arizona State University
Ari Patrinos, Director, Department of Energy Human Genome Project
Michele Puryear, MD, PhD, Chief, Genetic Services Branch, Maternal and Child Health
Rayna Rapp, PhD, Professor of Anthropology, New School
Eileen Rawnsley, RN, President, International Society of Nurses in Genetics
Maggie Sadoway, Board of Directors, National Home Learning Association
Craig Venter, PhD, CEO, Celera Genomics
Vivian Weinblatt, MS, President, National Society of Genetic Counselors
Huntington Willard, PhD, President, American Society of Human Genetics

POINT SYSTEM

The following system will be used to judge the essays:

Understanding of the issue(s).	0 – 30 points
Ability to grasp the wider implications of the issue on a societal level.	0 – 20 points
Clarity and effectiveness of style and organization of essay.	0 – 10 points
Ability to establish a convincing and coherent line of argument.	0 – 10 points
Originality in approach and treatment of the topic.	0 – 10 points
Evidence of research and use of bibliography.	0 – 10 points
Adherence to format and length rules.	0 – 10 points
TOTAL POINTS	100 points

CONTEST RULES

1. The essay contest is open only to students in grades 7-12.
2. All essays must be accompanied by the Essay Registration Form provided in this application and submitted to the Genetic Alliance (postmarked) no later than **April 30, 2001**.
3. All essays must be 1,500 words or less.
4. All essays must be typed and double-spaced.
5. All essays must include endnotes and a bibliography of all sources.

GUIDELINES FOR THE TEACHER

If you should need further copies of this Application, please go to <http://www.geneticalliance.org/contest.html>.

There are no photocopying restrictions on the application; thus, it can be reproduced as many times as necessary.

It is imperative for students to cite all their sources of information.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions please contact Sharon Terry (sterry@geneticalliance.org) or 781.784.3817.

Registration

General Information:

NAME: _____

HOME ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ Email _____

GRADE LEVEL: (or equivalent if home schooled): _____

Students in public, private or parochial schools:

TEACHER'S NAME: _____

PRINCIPAL'S NAME: _____

SCHOOL NAME: _____

SCHOOL ADDRESS: _____

SCHOOL TELEPHONE: _____

Home schooled students:

PARENT'S NAME: _____

Mail this with the completed essay to:

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