



## Young Science Achievers 2010 Program Off to Good Start at Princeton Event

Monday, March 1, 2010



At a rousing kickoff event attended by about 200 persons at Princeton University in January, Alcatel-Lucent renewed its support for the Young Science Achievers<sup>®</sup> Program (YSAP). YSAP is dedicated to encouraging New Jersey and New York high school students from groups underrepresented in science, engineering, technology and math to pursue careers in those areas.

In connection with the program at Princeton, the Alcatel-Lucent Foundation, which is the philanthropic arm of Alcatel-Lucent, made a financial commitment of \$240,000 for three years toward the program.

The Foundation is co-funding YSAP's Education Frontiers for Young Women and Youth in Under-Served Communities Program, which supports high school student research projects. Scientists and researchers at Bell Labs, the Alcatel-Lucent research arm, will mentor the students.

The Young Science Achievers Program evolved from the Bell Labs Science Grant Program, which began in 1988. For more than 20 years, it has helped thousands of students with contributions from a variety of sources. Alcatel-Lucent alone has supported more than 500 students through mentoring activities organized by the Alcatel-Lucent Foundation.



About 165 students participated in the kickoff in an engineering building at Princeton, and they competed in teams to create a slogan for YSAP to use in connection with the program. Each of the four teams received a USB memory stick courtesy of Princeton's MIRTHER center, which is a National Science Foundation Engineering Research Center based at Princeton, with partners City College New York, Johns Hopkins, Rice, Texas A&M, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Each member of the team



that created the winning slogan — "Unleash the Unimaginable" — won an American Express gift card.

Among the speakers at the Saturday kickoff celebration were Dr. Jorge Valdes, President of YSAP; Dr. Richard E. Shope III, leader of CAUSE, which advances urban science research, education and enterprise development; and Desiree Castillejos, Director of Strategy and Innovation, Network and Systems Integration, Alcatel-Lucent.

Highlighting advances in recruiting, Dr. Valdes spoke about the objective of bringing even more minority students into the program. "We believe the program makes a difference

to these special students who have a genuine interest in science but whose resources are limited," he said.

Dr. Shope, who recently retired as an analyst working for the Office of Science Research and Analysis at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, explained to the mentors — volunteers from Alcatel-Lucent, AT&T and Princeton — how the students can spark creativity on any project and encouraged them to think "out of the box." Desiree spoke to the parents about the admissions process for getting their sons and daughters into the college of their choice.

Students also spent part of the day's program touring a science laboratory and clean room lab at Princeton.

YSAP provides high school students in New Jersey and New York with resources to help students succeed in executing a science project. Targeting women of all ethnic groups and males of African American, Hispanic or Native American descent, YSAP offers grants to high school students for the purchase of equipment and materials to do science research.

Through the program, students gain experience in formulating budgets, writing formal proposals, and speaking in public. They also receive opportunities for research internships during the summer.

Alcatel-Lucent now provides 15 mentors to the program, including employees Desiree Castillejos, Elaine Drager, Mike Garyantes, Jane London, Leslie Guth, Michael Hodgetts, Bob Feldman, Ron Sharp, Roopali Paranjpe, Prasad Sadhanala, Sandesh Jajoo, Bill Armbruster and Eric Zhu, as well as Tina Garyantes and Jessica Seltzer, who are relatives of employees.

"Our high-tech world has an increasing need for people who want to investigate how things work and discover what is possible," says Beatrice Tassot, Executive Director of the Foundation. "We need more engineers, scientists and researchers, and this program encourages students with that potential to pursue careers in those fields."

*By Tom Landers*



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