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Joy Patel, Muhddesa Lakhana win Jonas E. Salk Scholarships from CUNY

May 16, 2016

for medical study.

AB Wire

Two Indian Americans are among the eight graduates who have been awarded by the City University of New York its prestigious Jonas E. Salk Scholarships for medical study, in recognition of their outstanding scholarship and research on subjects including neuroscience, cancer, genetics and

molecular biology.

The 2016 Salk Scholars hail from Hunter College, City College, Baruch College, and Queens College, as well as the Macaulay Honors Colleges at Hunter College, City College and Queens College. Scholars were accepted at the Harvard, Yale, New York Institute of Technology, Hofstra, SUNY Upstate and SUNY Downstate medical schools. The Salk Scholarships were awarded on May 10 at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, according to a press release.

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The two Indians are Joy Patel (City College) and Muhddesa Lakhana (Macaulay Honors College at

City College).

The others are: Christos Mouzakitis (Macaulay Honors College at Queens College); Danielle Cohen (Macaulay Honors College at Queens College); and Allen Ko (Baruch College); Jennifer Zagelbaum (Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College); Min Gyu Noh (City College); and Alex Bonilla (Macaulay Honors College at City College).

The Salk Scholarships recognize the high ability and scholarship of students who plan careers in medicine and the



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biological sciences and who are judged likely to make significant contributions to medicine and research. They are selected on the basis of original research papers undertaken with prominent scientist mentors.

Salk, a 1934 City College graduate, developed the polio vaccine in 1955. He turned down a ticker-tape parade that was offered to honor his discovery, asking that New York City use the money for scholarships. The city provided initial funding for the Salk Scholarships in 1955.

The endowment provides a stipend of \$8,000 per scholar, to be appropriated over three or four years of medical studies to help defray medical school costs. Salk Scholars also receive achievement citations and diagnostic kits that include an otoscope and ophthalmoscope.

The research of the two Indian Americans:

Muhddesa Lakhana – Macaulay Honors College at City College of New York. New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Research: *Possible Elevated Plasma Triglycerides Cause Early Atherosclerotic Lesion Formation in Female LDLR-/-:apoD-/- Mice on a Western-type Diet*

Muhddesa Lakhana was inspired by stories about her father’s experiences as a physician in Mumbai before he immigrated to America. Often running out of basic necessities, he and other physicians still managed to treat 60 to 70 patients a day. Lakhana gained experience volunteering at Elmhurst Hospital’s pediatric emergency room, where she witnessed the



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doctors’ dedication, compassion and skills. In addition to internships, she worked as a Peer Health Exchange tutor, visiting Harlem high schools and teaching ninth graders about making healthier decisions about marijuana and alcohol. The experience reinforced her interest in patient education.

Joy Patel – City College of New York. New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Research: *Determination of Optimal Secondary Structure for In-Vitro Transcription of Circular Oligonucleotides by RNA Polymerase III*

Joy Patel’s decision to pursue medicine was inspired by her late grandfather’s commitment to helping those in need. Although he only attended school through the eighth grade, he tirelessly toiled to lay the foundation for a nonprofit hospital in the village in India where he was born. Now open for two years, the hospital serves people from nearby villages, although he didn’t live to see it. Patel, a biochemistry major, says she is also inspired by Dr. Jonas Salk, who renounced personal profit for creating the polio vaccine, and by Dr. Hunter Adams, founder of the Gesundheit Institute, which practices medicine free of charge.

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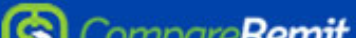
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