

## THE ALBERT AND MARY LASKER FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2016 ESSAY CONTEST

*Honorees Explore the Ability of Modern Neuroscience to Treat Psychiatric Illness, the Future of Microbial Management and the Cutting Edge of DNA Editing*

June 6, 2016, New York, NY: The Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation revealed today the three winners of the 2016 Lasker Essay Contest. Challenged to examine *which fundamental discoveries in basic medical research have not been clinically explored and translated into better human health*, the winners explored topics in the fields of neuropsychiatric disease, microbial management, and DNA editing. The Essay Contest winners receive funds to support their education and have been invited to New York City to meet the 2016 Lasker Award winners during the Awards Ceremony on September 23.

The first-place prize of \$10,000 was awarded to David Ottenheimer, a graduate student in neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University. In his essay, "Modern Neuroscience Has the Tools to Treat Psychiatric Illness," Ottenheimer argues that the ongoing evolution in neuroscience research could create better treatments for psychiatric illnesses through precise manipulation of neurons.

"We are pleased to recognize the young scientists who penned the winning essays. The diversity of the topics explored is a testament to the talent of the next generation of scientists training at our nation's universities," said Dr. Claire Pomeroy, President of the Lasker Foundation. "The Lasker Foundation is committed to encouraging future science leaders to think innovatively and creatively about medical research."

The second-place prize of \$5,000 was awarded to Therese Korndorf, a medical student at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria. Her essay, "Hacking the Bacterial Social Network: Quorum Sensing and the Future of Microbial Management" suggests that by learning the social behavior of bacteria we can more effectively combat infectious diseases and modify the human biome.

The third-place prize of \$2,500 was awarded to Unikora Yang who discussed CRISPR in the essay "The Cutting Edge of DNA Editing: Translating CRISPR to Improve Human Health." The Children's Hospital Los Angeles pediatrics resident explored the potential of DNA-editing technologies like CRISPR to improve health by creating therapies for previously incurable genetic diseases.

To learn more about each of the winners and read each essay in full, please visit:

<http://www.laskerfoundation.org/>

**About the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation:** Founded in 1942, the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation envisions a healthier world through medical research. It seeks to improve health by accelerating support for medical research through recognition of research excellence, education, and advocacy. For much of the 20th century, the Foundation was led by Mary Lasker, who was America's most prominent citizen-activist for public investment in medical research. She is widely credited with motivating the White House and Congress to greatly expand federal funding for medical research, particularly through the NIH. For more information about the Lasker Foundation and its programs, visit <http://www.laskerfoundation.org>. Follow news from the Lasker Foundation on Twitter (@LaskerFDN) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/LaskerFDN>).