



## Somers Science Research Foundation – Newsletter

Welcome to the Somers High School Science Research Foundation newsletter. The goal of this publication is to keep members informed and to provide the opportunity to learn more about the program, the students, and their work. Each newsletter will feature student biographies, important dates or deadlines, and other news.

### Student Research Showcase

We are proud to highlight our Science Research participants.

#### Lulejeta Latifi



My name is Lulejeta Latifi and I am currently a senior in the Science Research Program here at Somers. I started out this class as a sophomore with so little known about my soon to be passion for medicine and research. Now, just about three years later, I'll soon be graduating with a vast understanding of research, what it takes and how it's done. My first year in the program, I spent much time researching neuroblastoma, a type of pediatric cancerous tumor that affects around 800 new children per year. Prior to the conclusion of my first year, I presented a project at the

Somers Science Fair titled "Using Immunotherapy as an Effective Treatment for Neuroblastoma" and secured a 2nd place spot in the Medicine and Health category. Through that research and a couple connections to New York Medical College, I was able to acquire my first mentor to guide me through research for the upcoming summer. My mentor, Dr. Guo, assisted me in my first lab-based project, "Role of Myeloperoxidase in Lewis Lung Carcinoma Progression". Spending about 5 weeks in the lab the summer before my junior year, I was able to gain a ton of hands on experience through the help of Dr. Guo and his grad student, Juan. Unfortunately, complications arose in the data extraction portion and we were unable to finalize any results, meaning I was unable to register to compete with my work. With COVID-19 taking our world by storm,



### Fundraising Activities



Stay tuned for more information about a future fundraiser to outfit the classroom with a brand new rest and research sofa that will make the space an environment for creative thinking and collaborative working!

### Gift Giving with a Purpose!

The Somers Science Research Foundation has teamed-up with Unique Design Creations to provide a win-win fundraising solution. You shop for family, friends and business associates anytime during the year, Unique Design Creations will give back 10% of the sale to the Somers Science Research Foundation.

To make a purchase and support SSRF, simply go to <https://www.uniquecreations.com/> select and purchase any gift items and during check-out indicate in the drop-down that you want to support Somers Science Research. After your purchase, Unique Design Creations will automatically give 10% of your purchase to SSRF.

### Family and Community Q & A

A new monthly feature will include a section to answer questions from families, students, and community members. Please submit your questions using the Google Form below and they will be answered in the following newsletter edition. There is a lot to learn about the program and we hope to be able to answer any questions you may have.

**Q&A Google Form:** <https://forms.gle/1bW7seLkr8aL3hPZA>

## Lulejeta Latifi

I have now taken on a new project with a research team at Westchester Medical Center, titled "Current state and future perspectives of telemedicine use in surgery during the COVID-19 pandemic". I'm hoping this project will bring me my first publication as well as many more opportunities to come. In college, I plan to take on a pre-med track and pursue a career as a surgeon.

## Christian Kirchmann



I started out science research in my sophomore year. At this time I was very interested in Hydrogen Fuel Cells: A type of generator which combines Hydrogen and Oxygen in order to generate energy. I found the idea of using this renewable energy and using it to stay greener was a step that needs to be taken as soon as possible. After doing countless hours of research I emailed lots of possible mentors however I was not able to find one. Eventually, I changed my topic and joined a program at TeaTown that allowed me to conduct research for my project relating to decreasing the population of mosquitoes.



I gathered data and wrote a research paper. I took this research and I used it to compete in different fairs. For my junior year heading into senior year, I changed my project again which meant I had to do a lot of research to catch up. My new project focused on improving the healing rate for diabetics. This research is important as diabetes affects millions of Americans and the amount of people with diabetes is only

projected to grow. Therefore, caring for diabetic wounds is becoming even more imperative. My research was done at home where I analyzed data given to me by my mentor.

## Competition News

The Tri County Science and Technology Fair (<https://discoverctr.org/tri-county-science-and-technology-fair>) was virtual and asynchronous this year during the last week in April.

Medicine & Medical Science and Technology

- 2nd Place - Nitin Seshadri
- 3rd Place - Peyton DiSiena

We're proud to have students as finalists in the GENIUS Olympiad! (<https://geniusolympiad.org/index.html>)

- Nitin Seshadri
- Melissa Amante
- Nico DeMarinis
- Nick Cirillo
- Lule Latifi
- Peyton DiSiena
- Gabby Susca

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## Upcoming Competitions

**The GENIUS Olympiad** is an international competition about environmental issues hosted by the Rochester Institute of Technology that hosts projects from five general disciplines.

- May 15th- participant and presentation registration
- June 12th- award ceremony

## Somers Westlake Science Fair

- Saturday June 5th



**Congratulations to the seniors on their college acceptances and final decisions!**

Melissa Amante	Northeastern University
Nicola DeMarinis	Virginia Tech
Peyton DiSiena	Cornell University
Kaitlyn DeRosa	Cornell University
Anna Keane	SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Christian Kirchmann	Ohio State University
Lulejeta Latifi	University of Arizona
Sean Reichbach	TBD
Nitin Seshadri	University of Pennsylvania

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### **Volunteer Opportunities**

The Somers Science Research Foundation is a booster organization that relies on parents and community members to support our program by volunteering their time. We welcome volunteers who want to support our hard-working students. Please email [board@somersscienceresearch.com](mailto:board@somersscienceresearch.com) to learn more about opportunities to get involved.

Currently the board has the following open positions:  
Vice President  
Fundraising Chairperson

A background in science is not required to volunteer. The foundation board meets monthly via Zoom and is a non-profit organization that benefits from community involvement.

### **Tips for finding a mentor**

As students begin their journey as student researchers, finding a mentor is an important and sometimes challenging step. Some suggestions for finding a mentor include:

- Don't be shy. Ask everyone and feel free to brag a little about yourself, your project and Somers Science Research in general. Check out what research facilities are in your area and reach out to those that fit your field of study.
- Always assume positive intent from those you reach out to, and follow-up once or twice if you don't hear back immediately.
- Be familiar with the mentor's research, and be specific about why it interests you.
- Friends and classmates may be able to suggest former mentors, so use social media platforms to connect with alumni.

## Annual Dues

Just a friendly reminder to pay your annual suggested membership donation of \$20 for the year. This can conveniently be done through <https://www.myschoolbucks.com> or via the website at <https://www.somersscienceresearch.com/store.html>. Members are recognized in the program book at the annual Science Research Symposium in May and on a donor poster at the Somers Science Fair in June, as well as on the 'Donations' page of the website. Contributions to the SSRF are tax-deductible.

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### Car Window Stickers are still available.

Please email [WMAelia@somersschools.org](mailto:WMAelia@somersschools.org) to get a sticker at no charge.

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### Somers Science Research Store

Support the program by showing off your Science Research gear! Please take a look at the items available for sale at <https://www.somersscienceresearch.com/store.html>.



### Support Science Research

The Somers Science Research Program relies on the generous support of our donors in the community. In addition to fundraising efforts by the foundation committee, your contribution will help to support the program by funding events, equipment and travel. Contributions to the SSRF are tax-deductible.

<https://www.somersscienceresearch.com/donations.html>

### Donors:

#### *Platinum (\$1000+)*

The Latifi Family, Anonymous

#### *Silver (\$100 - \$499)*

Emanuel Acosta, Bridgham Barr Orthodontics, Tracy Dodd, the D'Souza Family, the Friscia Family, the Gonzalez Hauger Family, Yeeling Lee, the Murphy Family, Mads Pederson, Andrea Reichbach, the Taylor Family

#### *Bronze (<\$100)*

Candace Bassi, the Bensabeur Family, the Bilbao-Mahoney Family, the Blanch Family, Mr. Caron, Frances Cicogna, the DeMarinis Family, the DeMeo Family, James Dodd, the Dunn Family, the Gillis Family, the Ginty Family, the Googel Family, Kathryn Graham, the Heese Family, Helga Lanza, the Mills Family, the Onishi Family, Denise Potter, the Rao Family, Candice Rivas, the Seeger Family, the Seshadri Family, the Siemers Family, Lauren Smith-Arena, Vito Susca, Rozmarin SzaboBruncaj, the Townsend Family, the Wilke-Olsen Family, Hangu Yeo, Eun-Jeong Yi

## Fundraising Activities

### Amazon Smiles

The Somers Science Research Foundation Incorporated now has an Amazon Smile account so that your everyday shopping can benefit our students. If you specify SSRF as your charity and make [smile.amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) your default amazon link (in place of [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)), 0.5% of every purchase you make on Amazon will be donated to the Foundation to benefit our students and their research. Once it's set up you don't need to do anything else!

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**Click below to sign up and start donating:**



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### Somers Science Research

Detailed information about the program is available on our website at <https://www.somersscienceresearch.com/home.html>. Some of the information you will find there includes the course overview, timeline, and areas of research. Additionally, you can learn about the foundation, the competitions and access pictures/videos from previous years.