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SENIOR JAGDEEP BHATIA SELECTED AS FINALIST FOR 2020 REGENERON SCIENCE TALENT SEARCH

Submitted by Denis Kelly

Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Senior Jagdeep Bhatia, 17, of Green Brook Township has been selected as one of 40 finalists nationwide in the Regeneron Science Talent Search 2020.

The announcement of the 40 finalists was made on Monday, January 20, in Tarrytown, N.Y., and Washington, D.C., by Science Talent Search sponsors, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and Society for Science & the Public (the Society).

Bhatia's project title is: "Simple and Fast Algorithms for Interactive Machine Learning with Random Counter-Examples."

Bhatia explained that while the current processes of training machines – what is generally thought of as 'Artificial Intelligence' – those processes now tend to be slow, requiring a lot of data.

"My project tries to solve that," he said, "tries to make the whole process more data efficient. My proposal asserts that there is a more data efficient way to train machines. I attempt to prove that assertion using mathematical proofs. The whole point is to find a way to make the learning process for machines more like human learning."

He said he plans to study Computer Science and machine learning in college, but is undecided yet about whether he plans to pursue a Ph.D. or other advanced scholarship in computer Science, or build his knowledge and expertise in Computer Science to then apply that preparation in an applied or business use.

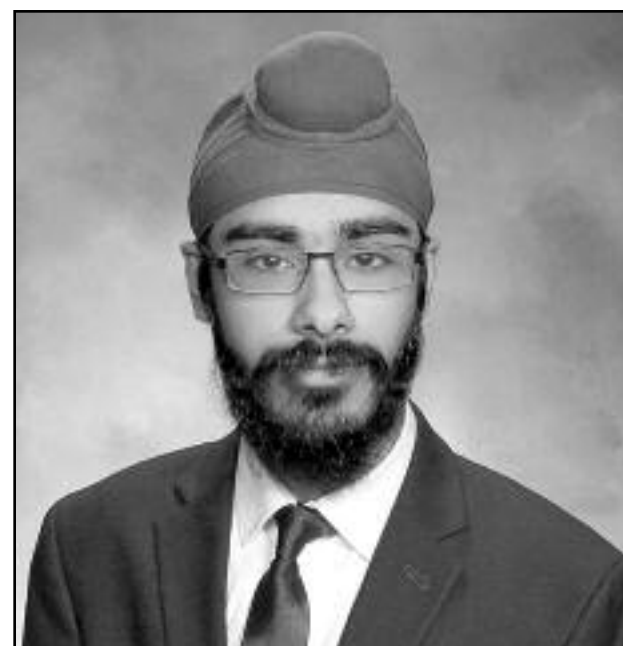
For the short term, he is very excited to have been selected by the Science Talent Search, and is looking forward to meeting his fellow search finalists in Washington, D.C.

"I am really excited and grateful to have this wonderful opportunity," said Bhatia. "I am really excited to present my work in Washington, D.C., and meet the other finalists."

While at WHRHS, he has been President of the Computer Science Club, which has included, among other things, helping to organize and stage the WHRHS "HillsHacks" Hackathons the last couple of years. In addition, he is president of the WHRHS Math Team, and a four-year athlete on the WHRHS Cross Country Team.

The Regeneron Science Talent Search 2020 is the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors. Alumni have gone on to have world-changing careers in STEM (Science Technology Engineering Mathematics) fields and earn some of the most esteemed academic honors, including the Nobel Prize, the Fields Medal, the National Medal of Science, the MacArthur Fellowship and even an Academy Award.

The 2020 finalists were selected from 1,993 highly qualified entrants, all of whom completed an original research project and extensive application process. The finalists were selected based on their projects' scientific rigor and their potential to become world-changing scientists and leaders.



Finalists' projects span a diversity of STEM-related topics including targeting cancer via signaling pathways, developing a mobile application for stroke diagnosis using deep learning and computer vision, and identifying an improved method for trace level arsenic quantification in water.

The finalists will travel to Washington, D.C. from Thursday, March 5 to Wednesday, March 11, where they will undergo a rigorous judging process and compete for more than \$1.8 million in awards. They will also have an opportunity to interact with leading scientists, meet with Members of Congress and display their projects to the public on Sunday, March 8.

The finalists are each awarded at least \$25,000, and the top 10 awards range from \$40,000 to \$250,000. The top 10 Regeneron Science Talent Search 2020 winners will be announced at a black-tie gala awards ceremony at the National Building Museum on Tuesday, March 10. In total, more than \$3 million in awards will be distributed throughout the Regeneron Science Talent Search, which includes the awards to finalists as well as the \$2,000 provided to each of the top 300 scholars and their schools.

For a list of this year's finalists, visit societyforscience.org.

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LIBRARY SYSTEM INTRODUCES TRANSLATOR DEVICES TO CONNECT WITH CUSTOMERS

Submitted by Tracy Carney

According to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 30.5 percent of Somerset County residents speak a language other than English at home. As a result, the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) offers translation devices at all 10 Library branches to ensure that all customers are able to communicate with Library staff.

"We are excited by how well these inexpensive devices enable us to bridge the language divide," said Brian Auger, county Library administrator.

The Google minis can translate to and from 44 different languages including Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic. The U.S. Census survey shows that approximately 11 percent of residents in the County speak Spanish at home, while 9.5 percent speak a European based language, and 8.3 percent speak an Asian or

Pacific Island based language.

"We deployed these devices to serve as on-demand language translators in our communities," said Lauren Ryan, manager of branch services, strategic initiatives and special projects. "While we aim to have bilingual staff present in our branches, these devices can supplement communication when a bilingual staff member is not present. This initiative is in alignment with our Strategic Priority of addressing the needs of shifting demographics and our Core Service of providing technology access and expertise that meet the needs of the community."

In addition to these devices, the Library System offers hundreds of titles in Spanish; foreign language learning resources including Mango Languages and Rosetta Stone; and English Conversation classes in partnership with Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County.

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THREE ATHLETES ANNOUNCE PLANS ON FEBRUARY COLLEGE SIGNING DAY

Submitted by Denis Kelly

Three student athletes in the Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) Class of 2020 who play interscholastic sports for the Warriors announced their intentions to attend next year and play intercollegiate sports at Division I colleges, at a February College Signing Day Ceremony, Wednesday, February 5, at the school.

One of the athletes competes on the WHRHS Track and Field Team, and two compete on the WHRHS Fencing Team.

The students signing to matriculate and play at Division I colleges are:

Teresa Rotolo, who plans to attend and compete in Track and Field at Villanova University (Wildcats), Villanova, Pa., Big East Conference;

Chloe Mok, who plans to attend and compete in Fencing at Sacred Heart University (Pioneers),

Fairfield, Conn., Northeast Conference; and

Victor Odoliniec, who plans to attend and complete in Fencing at Yale University (Bulldogs), New Haven, Conn., Ivy League Conference.

"Congratulations to our student-athletes who have decided to continue their academic and athletic careers at such wonderful Universities," said WHRHS Athletic Director Dan Root. "We are very proud of them."

There are three College Signing Days throughout the high school academic year: November, February and May.

Earlier in the 2019-2020 School Year, an additional seven WHRHS student athletes in the Class of 2020 who play interscholastic sports for the Warriors announced their intentions to attend and play intercollegiate sports at Division I or Division II colleges, on November College Signing Day, Wednesday, November 13.



(above) WHRHS students Teresa Rotolo, Chloe Mok, and Victor Odoliniec will continue their athletic careers at Division I colleges next year.

Photos by WHRHS

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CARING CONTACT CRISIS LINE GRADUATES 96TH CLASS NEXT TRAINING TO BEING MARCH 17

Submitted by Mary Claire Givelber

Six area residents completed training in December 2019 to become volunteers on the Caring Contact crisis hotline. During the 52 hours of training the graduates developed the ability to listen actively, assess the needs of someone in crisis and provide empathy and support. The training included dynamic and interactive presentations by guest experts in active listening, grief recovery, mental health issues and suicide intervention. Volunteer Listener Training is taught by trainers who are long-time listeners and nationally certified instructors in Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training.

"I trained to become a caring contact listener in an effort to connect with those that need to feel human connection in order to cope with whatever struggles they are going through whether it be mental health, family crisis, chronic physical pain or economic hardship," stated Bisrat Mekbebe of Scotch Plains. "I am fortunate to be in a position to give back to my community through Caring Contact in this way."

When asked why he was drawn to this work, Ryan Hinderliter of Westfield said, "I wanted to channel my love for psychology and my passion for making a difference in the community into something meaningful."

Caring Contact is an award-winning, volunteer-staffed crisis hotline and listening community that supports the Nation Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Located in Westfield, NJ, they provide active listening support and best-in-class education to central and northern New Jersey.

The next volunteer training will begin on March 17, 2020. For more information about this training call 908-301-1899 or visit caringcontact.org.



(above, l-r) Back row: Ryan Hinderliter, Amit Trivedi, Michael Coleman, Shailesh Lal, Carolyn Paznek, Derek Cooke, Marc Julius, David Burman, Charles Christophel. Middle row: Laurie Feinberg, Sarah Lindell, Sasha Singh, Ananya Jain, Kaelin Stoll, Kacie Neilson, Jaimie Radakovich, Larry Kornreich, Arlene Klemow. Front row: Bisrat Mekbebe, Jasmine Dursun, Michelle Mendoza, Pam Webb, Kate Gorelick, Payl Patel.

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WHRHS SPRING MUSICAL “MATILDA” MARCH 19, 20, & 21

Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) student singers and thespians entertained fellow students, faculty, parents, and fans at the 2019-2020 Script and Cue Winter Cabaret, on Thursday, January 16. The Winter Cabaret was presented using the intimate coffee house format on the PAC stage, as have all the WHRHS “Cabarets” in recent years.

Most of the student performers were also sharpening their poise on stage in front of a live

audience in anticipation of their participation in the annual WHRHS Spring Musical, “Matilda.” Matilda will be presented by Script and Cue in the PAC on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, March 19, 20, and 21, and as a matinee Saturday afternoon, March 21. Matilda includes numerous exuberant ensemble numbers, fetching for audiences of all ages.

The musical premiered on Broadway in 2013, and won five awards, including the Tony Award

for Best Book of a Musical. The year before, it won 7 Laurence Olivier Awards, presented by the Society of London Theatre. The musical’s “Book” was written by Dennis Kelly. Music by Tim Minchin. The musical is based on the novel, “Matilda,” 1988, a children’s tale by British author Roald Dahl. Dahl is also known for numerous books, including “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” “James and the Giant Peach,” and “Fantastic Mr. Fox.”



(above) The student singers and actors who performed at the Script and Cue Winter Cabaret, Thursday, January 16, at WHRHS gather for a post-performance photo on the Cabaret stage at the WHRHS Performing Arts Center (PAC). In addition to entertaining an audience of parents, students and fans, most of the students were also sharpening their poise and stretching their range on stage in front of a live audience in anticipation of their participation in the annual WHRHS Spring Musical, “Matilda.” Matilda will be presented by Script and Cue in the PAC on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, March 19, 20, and 21, and as a matinee Saturday afternoon, March 21.

Photo by WHRHS

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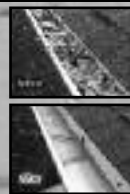
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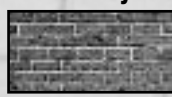
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RIO CLEMENTE & REGAN RYZUK ~ FOUR HAND PIANO DUO

Critically acclaimed audience favorite Bishop of Jazz, Rio Clemente, will appear at the Watchung Arts Center with his special guest Master Pianist-Composer, Regan Ryzuk, in a Four Hand Piano Duo on March 14 at 8 p.m. The show will be followed by a dessert reception with the opportunity to meet the performers.

Rio Clemente's career began with a BMI scholarship for musical theatre and subsequent studies at Juilliard School of Music. A grant from Broadway Tomorrow for new composers followed. Along with his classical training, Rio developed a style embracing a diversity of music that makes him one of the most expressive and versatile pianists anywhere. After several television appearances, Rio advanced professionally to playing at several distinguished concert halls and festivals, including Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center, Manhattan's famous Birdland and the Oak Room at the Algonquin Hotel, as well as the Newport and JVC Jazz Festivals. Rio also performed at the White House representing the United States Coast Guard and all Auxiliaries. He regularly appears with groups such as The Morris Choral Society and Orchestra and at jazz venues from Manhattan to Cape Code and from Florida to California.

Rio has recorded for well-known labels and has published twenty CDs under his own label, Etnemelc Music Productions. Rio in collaboration with Carmine Lombardo has written a number of selections ranging from gospel to Latin, including orchestral arrangements. A children's song was nominated for a Grammy and this past October his original musical "VIZHON" had its world premiere performance in Florida. As a music educator, and teacher, he has served as music director for the Generations of Jazz program of the New Jersey Jazz Society, and has presented customized programs in schools, including Viva La Musica Latina with the late percussionist Russ Moy.

Regan Ryzuk, a graduate from Montville Township High School in Montville, New Jersey

studied with Robert Helps at Manhattan School of Music as well as attended The Juilliard School. Ryzuk's classical music studies then led into jazz studies with Jaki Byard and Sir Roland Hanna. At Juilliard, he studied music theory and composition.

Ryzuk began touring with various ballet companies – traveling through Europe and Latin America. The playing of ballet classes improved his improvisational techniques and laid the groundwork for one of his greatest compositional works – "48 Preludes and Fugues" – in the style of Johann Sebastian Bach. This work was composed over the course of a year when he was living in Switzerland. After moving back to the United States, Ryzuk lived in New York and continued his composition work. He also developed a base of students, including Fountains of Wayne co-founder, Adam Schlesinger. Ryzuk was a founding partner in a TV/film music

production company, respectively known as SOUNDGUILD. Regan's work can be heard on numerous television and movie projects through his work with Zomba Music. Additionally, he has provided music for Extreme Music Library, LTD.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 (\$22 WAC members) at the door. Buying tickets in advance is strongly recommended and can be purchased securely through Eventbrite (watchungartscenter@eventbrite.com). Tickets may also be purchased by mail (please include email address) or in person during office hours.

The Watchung Arts Center, located at 18 Stirling Road in Watchung on the Watchung Circle, is a multi-disciplinary arts facility serving Watchung, the surrounding communities and the Tri-State Area. To obtain more information about upcoming performances, classes and workshops, and monthly art exhibitions, please visit WatchungArts.org or call 908-753-0190.



(above) Rio Clemente will appear at the Watchung Arts Center with his special guest Master Pianist-Composer, Regan Ryzuk, in a Four Hand Piano Duo on March 14 at 8 p.m.

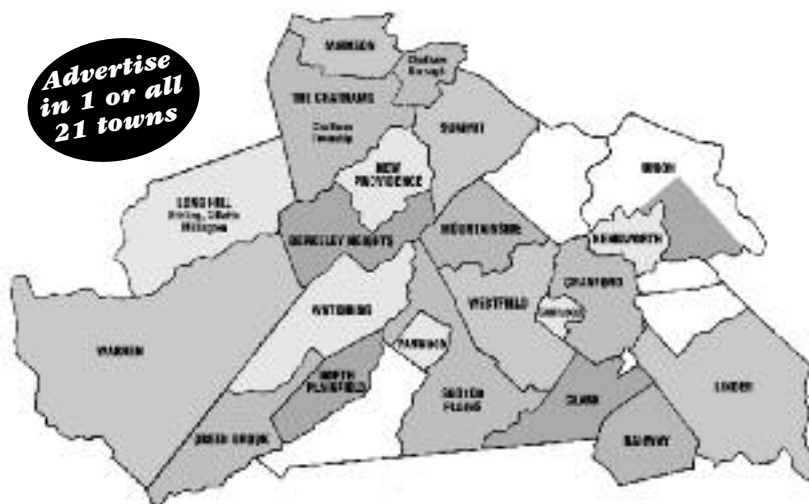
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“Learn More About ‘Hygge’: The Danish Style of Coziness and Comfort”

Tuesday, March 3, 10:30 a.m.

with Vanessa Young, Thirsty Radish. Learn about the Danish art of hygge, which helps us experience joy and relaxation in a uniquely cozy way. From the warmth of friendship to an inviting home environment, we will explore practical tips for creating well-being and happiness throughout the year. Hygge (pronounced hue-guh not hoo-gah) is a Danish word used when acknowledging a feeling or moment, whether alone or with friends, at home or out, ordinary or extraordinary, as cozy, charming or special.

“Mario Lanza and Me”

Monday, March 9, 10:30 a.m.

with Dominic Mantuano, Opera Singer and Performer, Opera to Broadway and a little in

between. Enjoy the music of Mario Lanza, from the 50s and 60s, with some County and Patriotic music in between. Dominic is planning a surprise ending that you will not want to miss.

“The Birds of the World”

Tuesday, March 10, 10:30 a.m.

with Ben Barkley, Naturalist, Somerset County Parks Commission, One of the greatest joys of birding is seeing beautiful blue jays, cardinals, chickadees and goldfinches right in your backyard. However, there are over 10,000 spectacular bird species found throughout the world. The lecture will cover a few families of birds and will introduce their life histories, ranges, descriptions, and interesting facts. Join us for a one-hour lecture about the wackiest, funniest, and most bizarre species from around the globe. This presentation will provide you with

a new appreciation for the world of birds!

“Eating Greens”

Monday, March 16, 10:30 a.m.

with Jennifer Korneski, MPH Program Coordinator, Healthy Living Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County Family & Community Health Sciences, Eating Greens! One characteristic of people who live long lives is that they eat healthful foods, especially vegetables. Leafy greens particularly are good for you and easy to prepare for a quick meal. Learn more about the health benefits of greens – kale, Swiss chard, spinach and more.

“Tips on Injury Prevention for the Achy Back”

Monday, March 23, 10:30 a.m.

with Mike Evangelist, PT, MSPT, JAG-ONE Physical Therapy, This talk will focus on the benefits of exercise for low back pain. Areas to be highlighted are: posture education, correct body mechanics for lifting, stretching exercises for tight back muscles and core/abdominal strengthening exercises. This program will be geared towards the senior population.

“The Practice of Formal & Informal Mindfulness”

Tuesday, March 31, 10:30 a.m.

with Lori Morell, Director of Health & Wellness of Parker Life, This Presentation is on the practice of formal and informal mindfulness to help reduce stress, anxiety and increase energy levels for a more focused, productive life. Learn how to identify and manage the various triggers that cause daily mental and physical obstacles for a more focused, rewarding life.

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