

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 11, 2016

OCSEF Excellence in STEM Awards and Reception 2016

IRVINE, California—June 5, 2016

OC Science, along with OCSEF, hosted the OCSEF Excellence in STEM Awards and Reception on June 5, 2016. Hundreds of people from around Orange County attended this event to view the amazing artwork on display as well as the winning science fair projects. Before the event started, guests were able to tour the building and see the finalists' artwork from the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Art Contest and several science fair projects from students across Orange County.

The event kicked off with the keynote speaker, Dr. Katherine Mackey, who talked about her studies in the field of marine biology. Afterwards, several winning students from the annual science fair presented a summary about their ideas and project. These included Ethan Nguyen, a sixth grader at McPherson Elementary, who tested how the shape of an egg dome affects how much force the egg can withstand; Shreyas Hukkeri, a freshman at University High School, who created an app called Hatchling and a smart air-quality monitoring system that senses toxic gases in homes; Emily Condon, a junior at Villa Park, who analyzed who was most at risk while driving; Sabreen Alam, a sixth grader at Deerfield Elementary, who tested the effectiveness of foods in stopping the growth of cancer tumors; Lauren Fishman, a junior at Sage Hill High School, who discovered internal and external differences in males and females of all ages while expressing emotion; and Emily Hsi, a sixth grader at Turtle Rock Elementary who discovered a different and more effective method of increasing rose longevity. Two 2016 Intel ISEF Talent Search finalists also presented: Michelle Xu, sophomore at Beckman High School, talked about her project, entitled, "Contact Order and its Application on the Hydrophobic-Polar Lattice Model for Protein Folding through Ant Colony Optimization." Charles Noyes, a junior at Villa Park High school, presented his project called "Pandora: A Blockchain-Driven Secure Multiparty Computation Market at Scale."

Next came the awards for the Arnold and Mabel Beckman Art Contest finalists, presented by Sherry Xu and Lucy Liu, two board members from OC Science. This contest was split into a Junior Division and a Senior Division, with categories in photography and art. Finalists were decided by OC Arts judges, while a popular vote was conducted on the OC Science Facebook page. The winners for Junior Photography were Sofia Reyes Franco and Liam McAllister, while the winners for Junior Art were Carly Zhou, Ashwin Jagadish, Iris Yang, and Jenny Lee. The winners for Senior

Photography were Jenna Schindele, while the winners for Senior Art were Kelly Zhou and Tyler Wu.

The event ended with many awards being given out to the OCSEF board and judges and volunteers who helped select the qualifying science fair projects. "So we set it up, and the kids are so nervous, and I tell them, 'It's fine! You've gotten this far!'" says Lois Weir, on how her favorite part of science fair judging.

After the presentations, a reception with a variety of snacks and drinks awaited the guests. Students and their families were able to explore the artwork and projects on display one last time and discuss with the OCSEF judges about the annual Science Fair competition.

###

OC Science is a student-run, non-profit organization working to spread interest in science and engineering among youth in Orange County. In today's ever-evolving society, scientific advancements and new technologies are continually emerging. STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) is becoming increasingly important to our nation's future. For this reason, OC Science aims to provide STEAM opportunities for the young minds of Orange County and beyond. Through these activities, we hope to inspire and instill an appreciation for the sciences among our youth, and as they grow, to support their endeavors and provide outlets in which they can explore their interests.