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***The Urban Bee Lab Awards Scholarships to Eight Local High School students in Inaugural Pitch for Pollinators Competition***

Students at the John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science recognized for their research using HoneyDNA research

ROXBURY, MA - April 9, 2024 - Urban Bee Lab (UBL), a research nonprofit on a mission to improve bee health, recently culminated a 6-month program called “Pitch for Pollinators” with an award presentation to the students, teachers, and administrations at the John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science in Roxbury, MA. Over forty students in Ms. Pocius’ Environmental Science Classes were tasked with producing a science-based project using real, cutting-edge data from the UBL’s Boston neighborhood bee hives and HoneyDNA map. The goal of the inaugural program was to help students feel more connected to their natural environment and enhance their scientific knowledge while also contributing to our greater understanding of pollinators. Pitch for Pollinators was a pilot program for Urban Bee Lab with grant funding from the Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation based in Boston and the Community Impact Grant Program at Ocean Spray. A generous in-kind donation was made by Fresh City Kitchen who provided a catered breakfast at the ceremony.

The participant’s teacher, Nicolette Pocius, shared her feedback: “Through Pitch for Pollinators, my students gained a new perspective on bees and honey. Students had previously viewed bees as a nuisance and gave little thought to honey production, with most not realizing that there can be a great diversity in the taste of honey, based on the flowers pollinated by bees. Students developed their scientific inquiry skills and learned how to perform statistical analyses of data. They honed their presentation skills and gained experience speaking in front of professionals from the field. Pitch for Pollinators is an incredible program and I am so thankful to have been able to participate in the pilot. I hope that more schools have the opportunity to participate in this program!

The judging panel included Noah Wilson-Rich (Executive Director at Urban Bee Lab), Katina Bentley (Associate Director at Urban Bee Lab), Ronnie Thompson (Data Analyst and Beekeeper at The Best Bees Company), Haley Schorer (Human Resources Manager at The Best Bees Company) and Benadette Manning (Retired Teacher, Boston Public Schools and Beekeeper). The judges attended student presentations in February 2024 and used a rubric to score each project in the Science, Math, Art, and Engineering categories. The winning teams were awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

**The winning projects include:**

- **Science** - How does the percentage of plant families present in HoneyDNA differ from summer to fall in Boston?
- **Math** - How does wind speed affect the amount of plant species found in a HoneyDNA sample?
- **Art** - How do the different species of plants affect the sweetness of honey?
- **Engineering** - Could a 3-D printed beehive represent a new approach to beekeeping, prioritizing the well-being of both bees and beekeepers utilizing a hands-free operation for collecting honey?

Executive Director, Noah Wilson-Rich, noted that one of the projects, *“...stood out for seeming very applicable to businesses regarding consumer research and was an excellent in-person discussion. We envisioned the sense of taste as a very subjective form of art.”*

Manning, a panel judge and former teacher remarked, *“Students did an excellent job of showing the research and data in various ways, including tables, graphs, citations, complex statistics, and were engaging and informative in their presentations.”*

Jesse Purvis was also in attendance at the award ceremony and is the Director of Policy for City Council President, Ruthzee Louijeune who added the following program endorsement, *“In fostering collaboration between non-profit organizations such as Urban Bee Lab, Boston Public Schools are offering students a special learning experience, intertwining research, science, biology, and ecology. This dynamic partnership not only bridges the gap between wildlife and urban life but also cultivates a transformative learning environment, empowering students to explore and innovate. I look forward to seeing this partnership flourish.”*

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**About Urban Beekeeping Laboratory & Bee Sanctuary, Inc.**

Urban Bee Lab (UBL) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit on a mission to improve bee health. Bees are the ultimate tie that binds food security, climate change, natural disaster mitigation, and ecological preservation.

In partnership with The Best Bees Company, UBL analyzes beehive data and reports results to elucidate trends and advance our understanding of global pollinator health. We aim to conduct cutting-edge research to stabilize honeybee health, and then extend those approaches to other, lesser-studied species of pollinators to promote and preserve biodiversity at corporate, residential, and government sites, and beyond.

To learn more, visit [www.urbanbeelab.org](http://www.urbanbeelab.org).

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