



http://www.aaas.org/news/releases/2008/0331summers_award.shtml

News: News Archive

AAAS's Lauren Summers Recognized for Contributions to Science Students with Disabilities

Lauren Summers, a program associate in Education and Human Resources at AAAS, has been recognized by Science Education for Students with Disabilities (SESD) for her efforts to make science accessible for all children in school classrooms.

Summers received the SESD Lifetime Achievement Award on 29 March during the Science-Abled Breakfast at the 2008 [National Science Teachers Association's](#) national conference in Boston. The award decision was unanimously voted on by the award committee.

"Lauren is a tireless advocate for improving science education for students with disabilities," said Babette Moeller, a past SESD president. "Through her mentorship, Lauren has made significant contributions to increasing the number of people with disabilities who have entered science, technology, engineering, and mathematics programs and the workforce."

Summers, who has cerebral palsy that affects her speech and muscular coordination, has been a program associate at the AAAS Project on Science, Technology and Disability since 1992. In that time, her work has influenced hundreds of young scientists, and has helped pioneer broad advances by students with disabilities across a range of scientific and engineering fields.

"She is a fearless advocate for breaking down stereotypes of people with disabilities and raising expectations," said Virginia Stern, director of the AAAS Project on Science, Technology and Disability.



Lauren Summers



Lauren Summers with ENTRY POINT! interns at NASA Jet Propulsion Lab

In addition to regularly mentoring students on course work and internships, Summers manages NASA's involvement in the ENTRY POINT! program for science and math students with disabilities.

Currently in its 13th year, [ENTRY POINT!](#) provides promising science and math students with disabilities competitive, paid summer internships in top government and private research institutions around the country. Current partnering organizations include NASA, Lockheed Martin, IBM, CVS, Merck, Pfizer, Google, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and Naval Air Command (NAVAIR).

The internships match the students' desire for competitive internships with an organization's need to attract the most talented workforce. Mentors and students involved in the program often serve as ambassadors to the wider community.

SESD is an affiliate of the National Science Teachers Association that promotes the teaching of science and the development of curricula for students at all levels, no matter what sort of disability they may have. In addition to a member newsletter, SESD annually publishes the *Journal of Science for Persons with Disabilities*.

Summers has held various leadership capacities within [SESD](#), including conference committee chair, newsletter editor, and president. The award decision was unanimously voted on by the award committee.

Before the science teachers' annual meeting, SEDS held a day-long pre-conference to discuss issues particular to science students with disabilities, including accommodations for students with color-blindness and how extra-curricular activities can support classroom instruction.

Shirley Malcom, head of Education and Human Resources at AAAS, said the award shows that others beyond AAAS recognize the accomplishments that flow from Summers' efforts.

"Her work directly tracks to the many individual students whose lives she has changed, to the many family members whose advocacy was affirmed, to the many mentors and teachers whose views on disability were altered," Malcom said. "What a wonderful recognition!"

Summers said she was honored to hear to be recognized by SEDS, and stressed the importance of the organization's work.

"Science education is tremendously exciting and every student should have access to every aspect of science," she said. "To deny it to anyone is a huge loss."

Benjamin Somers

31 March 2008

Copyright © 2008. American Association for the Advancement of Science.
All rights reserved.