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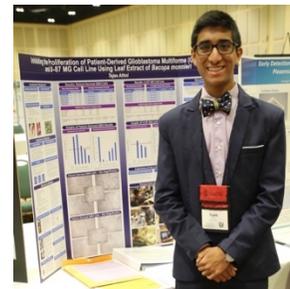
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## **Georgia Bio Names Stratford Academy Junior as Georgia BioGENEius Finalist**

### ***Tejas Athni Advances to San Diego to Compete Against Top Students From Across the Nation and Canada***

**Atlanta, GA (April 4, 2017)** – Georgia Bio and the Georgia BioEd Institute today named Stratford Academy junior **Tejas Athni** of Macon, GA as the winner of the 2017 Georgia BioGENEius Challenge, the premier competition for high school students that recognizes outstanding research and innovation in the biotechnology field. As Georgia's BioGENEius finalist, Athni will attend the 2017 BIO International Convention, the industry's trade conference from June 18-21 in San Diego, where he will engage with leading companies, scientists and innovators currently transforming the scientific landscape in order to gain valuable insights into an industry making significant contributions to the world.



While in San Diego, Athni will compete against high school students from the U.S., Canada and Germany in the International BioGENEius Challenge. The student projects will represent a range of biotechnology topics such as healthcare, agriculture, and the environment.

Athni's award-winning research is the first to report the effects of *B. monnieri* leaf extract in inhibiting the growth of human cancer cells. "Glioblastoma multiforme (GBM) is one of the most aggressive and deadly cancers found in the brain," says Athni. "Unfortunately, patients have a very short median survival time as there are very few effective treatment modalities. This research presents a novel potential treatment option for such a lethal disease. With further research and testing, this avenue of work could possibly lead to an improvement in the prognosis of patients afflicted with GBM."



The results, due to be published later this year in the journal *NeuroTherapeutics*, could lead to potential new therapies for this very aggressive form of brain cancer. Athni's work was completed during a summer research experience at Fort Valley State University in Georgia and Karmanos Cancer Institute in Detroit, Michigan.

"The BioGENEius Challenge highlights the breakthroughs made when we invest in and encourage young people to pursue their ideas," said Georgia Bio President and CEO Russell Allen. "Georgia Bio is thrilled that Tejas will represent our state at the upcoming BIO Convention."

We are proud to support this Georgia scholar as he develops tomorrow's healthcare innovations."

Georgia Bio also congratulates the Georgia BioGENEius runner-up, **Marissa McDonald** of Union Grove High School in McDonough, GA. McDonald's research characterizes the galectin-4 protein that binds to and kills certain bacteria that escape the human immune system. Better understanding of this protein may

help scientists to design more targeted antibiotics so that harmful bacteria are killed without adversely affecting the helpful bacteria living naturally in our gut.

Judging the 2017 Georgia BioGENEius were Jamie L. Graham, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton; Kami McMillan, Chubb; Ashan Perera, VWR; Jordan Rose, Georgia BioEd Institute; and Scott Silverman, Arbor Pharmaceuticals.

The Georgia BioGENEius Challenge is made possible through the sponsorship of Arbor Pharmaceuticals.

National and International winners will be announced during June 18-21, 2017 BIO International Convention. Winners will receive cash scholarships.

**###**

**Follow the BioGENEius Challenge:** Throughout the challenge, @BiotechInstitut will be tweeting interviews, photos, and engaging with the biotechnology community by using the hashtag #BioGENEius.

**About the Biotechnology Institute**

The Biotechnology Institute is an independent, national nonprofit organization dedicated to education about the present and future impact of biotechnology. Its mission is to engage, excite and educate the public, particularly students and teachers, about biotechnology and its immense potential for solving human health, food and environmental problems. For more information, visit [www.biotechinstitute.org](http://www.biotechinstitute.org).

**About the GeorgiaBioEd Institute**

The Georgia BioEd Institute is a division of Georgia Bio, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving the state's life science industry. The Institute's mission is to strengthen Georgia's life sciences workforce pipeline through classroom-to-career initiatives that align with industry needs. Learn more at [www.georgiabiomed.org](http://www.georgiabiomed.org) | [www.gabio.org](http://www.gabio.org).