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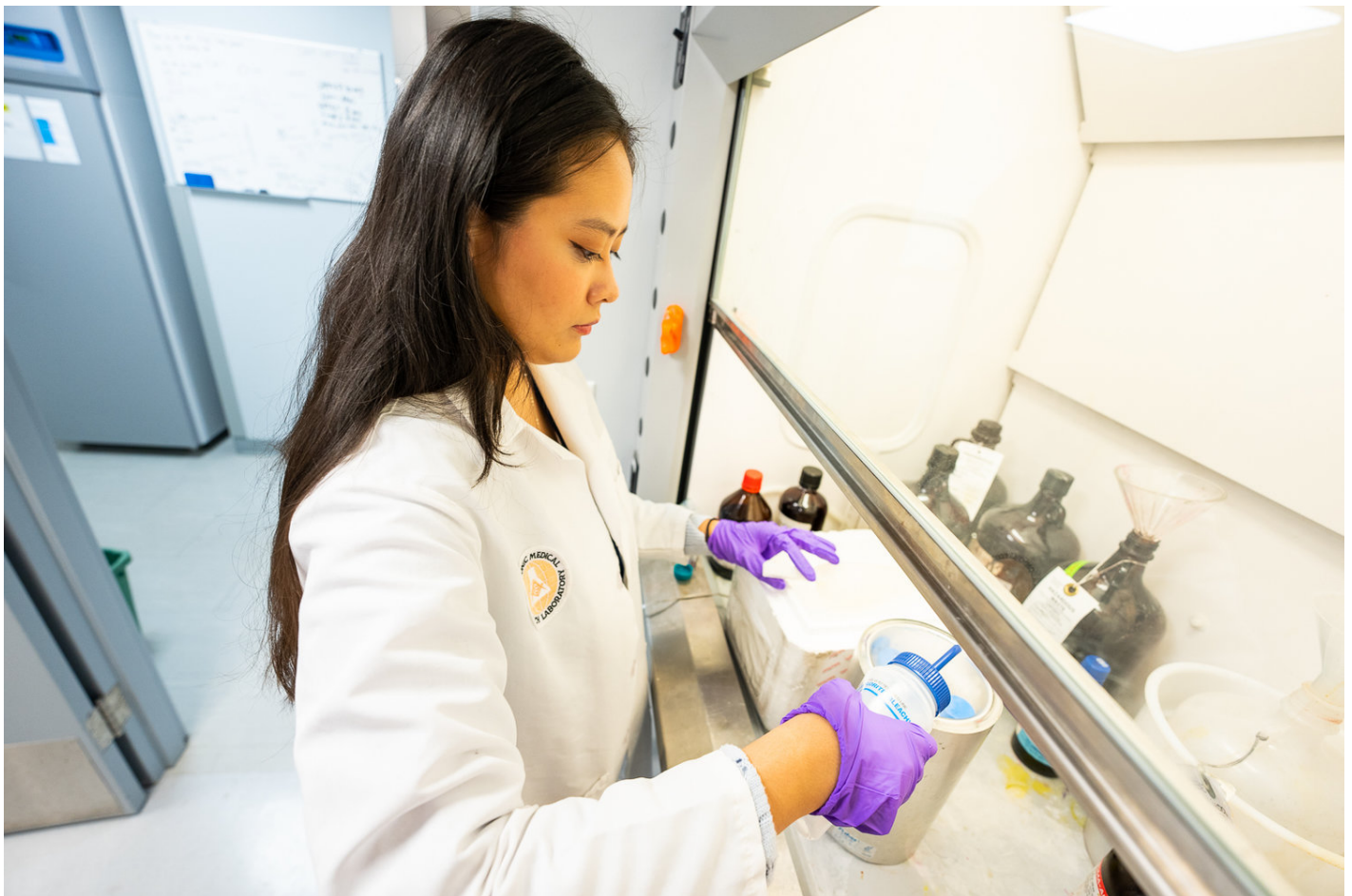
MAIN MENU



Main menu



Regional students to celebrate research accomplishments



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Sandy Thai is one of the 10 students who will be graduating from the Masonic Medical Research Institute's Summer Fellowship Program.

(PHOTO COURTESY OF ZACK STANEK)

Posted Thursday, July 28, 2022 6:19 am

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UTICA — Students from colleges and universities across the Mohawk Valley, Southern Tier and Capital regions have been spending their summer working alongside research scientists at the Masonic Medical Research Institute.

The Masonic Medical Research Institute is a research facility, located on the Masonic Care Community campus in Utica, that studies cardiovascular disease, autoimmunity, neurological disorders, diabetes, and cancer. The institute offers a Summer Fellowship Program each year that allows students to participate in a 10-week scholarship opportunity to conduct research.

The 10 students that participated in the summer program will celebrate their accomplishments with an invitation-only graduation ceremony on Friday, July 29, where the students will be presenting their research to colleagues, friends and family in attendance.

“Masonic Medical Research Institute enables tomorrow’s cures,” said Tony Gilbert, communications officer at Masonic Medical Research Institute. “The pacemaker that people use for their hearts and the defibrillator would not have been possible without one of the scientists who worked at MMRI, his name was Dr. Gordon Moe.”

While the Masonic Medical Research Institute was not involved with the creation of the pacemaker and defibrillator, Moe’s research on cardiac arrhythmias made the development of both medical devices possible.

“The science that we do does have really big positive impact on things,” he added.

The students participating in the Masonic Medical Research Institute’s Summer Fellowship Program are Anna Burkhartzmeyer and Dominick Lomonaco from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, Gianna Sisti and Ryan Soron from

Binghamton University, Sandy Thai from Hamilton
Hartwick College and Yashi Agarwal, Aaron Farley
Yuriy Milobog from SUNY Polytechnic Institute.

Thai, who is also a graduate of Thomas R. Proctor High School, has been conducting research on potential treatments for the autoimmune disease lupus while participating in the fellowship. She has expressed her desire to research the disease due to the marginalized communities that it affects.

“People’s lives are completely altered because of this disease,” Thai said. “When I learned that 98% of people with lupus are women and that women of color are disproportionately affected by it, the more compelled I was to learn about it.”

According to the Lupus Foundation of America, lupus is a chronic, long-term autoimmune disease that causes inflammation and pain in any part of the body due to the immune system attacking healthy tissue instead of infections.

Thai is hopeful that her research contributions on lupus will lead to a breakthrough, but is also aware of the difficulties in finding a cure for the disease.

“Even if my project doesn’t work out, I’m still grateful for the opportunities I’ve received,” she said. “It is such a great privilege to learn about the human body to this extent, to learn about lupus, and to learn from such brilliant scientists.”

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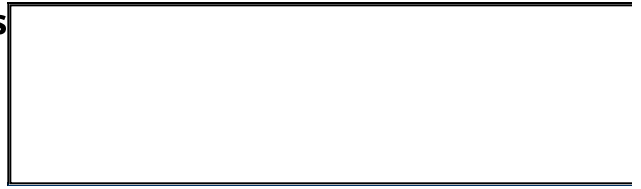
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