

centerline

CEE is pleased to announce that **Gilbert T. Bland** has joined the Center's Board of Trustees. He is Founder and Chairman of The GilJoy Group and has been an owner/operator and franchisee of Burger King, Pizza Hut, and Mrs. Fields Cookies. Mr. Bland is among the nation's largest African American franchisees. He exemplifies excellence with his tremendous expertise in operational management and passion, support, and advocacy for educational opportunities for underserved students.



Mr. Bland is the recipient of numerous awards and recognition for volunteerism, contributions, and leadership. In addition to having served as Chairman of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, he is President & CEO Urban League of Hampton Roads. For the past eight years, he has been chosen by *Virginia Business Magazine* as one of the 50 Most Influential Virginians. Mr. Bland received a B.S. in accounting and economics from James Madison University (JMU) and an MBA from Atlanta University. He is married to Joyce, and they are the proud parents of five children.



The 2021 Research Science Institute (RSI) was held virtually June 27 to August 7, 2021, in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The RSI Student Selection Committee, comprised of distinguished science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) professionals, selected 81 top achieving U.S. high school and international scholars based on academic merit, demonstrated leadership, and scientific achievement.

RSI students were challenged with a week of theoretical classroom work, followed by four-and-a-half weeks of research with a professor or research scientist in the students' respective areas of interest. The program hit its highest point during the final week when students demonstrated their work through written academic papers and oral findings to their peers and were evaluated by a panel of distinguished judges. The top five written presentations were

(Continued on Page 3)

CEE announced it will partner with Virginia Bio to establish and sponsor STEM Lyceums in Virginia's rural and urban high schools to provide information and hands-on activities that encourage STEM studies and careers in science and technology. CEE's STEM Lyceums are monthly virtual club meetings that will engage high school students in discussion and exploration of STEM concepts and STEM career trajectories, provided at no cost to schools or students. Virginia Bio directs Virginia Bio-Connect, a collaboration designed to increase connectivity and awareness of the existing programs, resources, and communities in the Commonwealth that support the life sciences industry. This project will bring life-changing opportunities and resources to students across the Commonwealth. **John Newby**, Chief Executive Officer of Virginia Bio, said that the partnership with CEE provides "an opportunity for students to hear life science professionals discuss their companies and their science education."



STEM Lyceums will be managed by **Laura-Ashley Alegbeley**. She earned a B.S. in Chemical Engineering

from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and an M.A. in Teaching from Loyola University Maryland. Laura-Ashley comes to CEE after working eight years as a high school STEM educator. Prior to that, she worked in industry as an Application Engineer.

CEE's new address is: 7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 700, McLean, VA 22102.
CEE's phone number and email addresses remain the same.

Equity Also for High-Achievers



In the short story “Harrison Bergeron,” by Kurt Vonnegut Jr., society has reached a state of perfect “equity.” People with any above-average traits are assigned handicaps to normalize them. Strong people are loaded down with extra weight to negate that advantage. Beautiful people are fitted with ugly masks or prosthetic crooked teeth. Intelligent people wear headphones that produce jarring noises to disrupt their cognitive processes. The title character is so exceptional in so many ways that he bears extreme versions of all these burdens, and when he throws them off, he is summarily executed.

Humans fortunately do not live in the Vonnegut world, but this nation is creeping closer to it rather than addressing the horrific challenges head-on. Increasing divisiveness in nearly every quarter is deeply disturbing and is ripping apart this nation’s delicate cohesiveness.

No one would dream of failing to nurture those who excel in athletics. However, rather than educating children to their potential, an increasing number of school systems, educators, and elected officials want to raise the academic floor but not the ceiling. It strains credibility to imagine that it is possible to raise low-performing students to an arbitrary medium standard but not possible to raise high-performing students to higher standards. And knowing absolutely that it’s possible, in what dystopian world can a society claim that it is not our responsibility to do so?

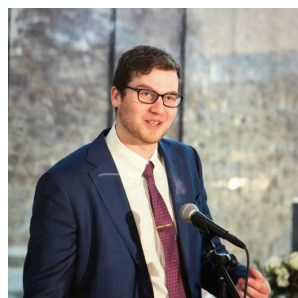
Instead of slouching towards fiction, let us live in a world where exceptional students have the right to measure themselves against what they are capable of achieving, not against medium.

Some studies that show putting all ability levels together in classes leads, on average, to academic benefits. The weasel words are “on average” because the benefits accrue to everyone except the high-achievers. Expansive thinkers will realize that the whole concept of being forced to choose which academic groups will benefit is ludicrous—a false choice. Ways must be found to serve all.

Is it difficult to give students the education that serves to maximize their potential? Certainly—there will always be challenges. The good news is that educated high-achievers will not be harnessed. They are proven to have solved what are seemingly unsolvable problems. Heaven help us if high-achievers are beaten down with acronyms and their brains decayed to atrophy.

Joann P. DiGennaro, CEE President

NEW CEE STAFFER

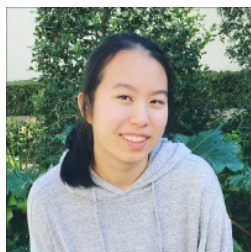


Zach Lipkin is CEE’s new Manager of Local, State & Federal Advocacy. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Government and Economics from the College of William & Mary. As an undergraduate, he served as the Development Coordinator for William & Mary’s chapter of Camp Kesem, the largest national organization dedicated to supporting children impacted by a parent’s cancer. Prior to joining CEE, he worked as a high school mathematics teacher at KIPP Collegiate in Nashville, through the Teach For America program. In his new role, Zach will provide information and engage leaders to discuss CEE’s mission to foster excellence in STEM. Zach also will serve as CEE’s liaison with Capitol Hill, advocating for excellence in education.

PARTNERSHIP WITH UNCF

CEE plans to expand STEM Lyceums beyond Virginia to underserved high schools throughout the U.S. in partnership with United Negro College Fund (UNCF). **Dr. Chad Womack**, Senior Director of National STEM Programs and Initiatives, UNCF, noted that the partnership with CEE will “leverage the UNCF network to promote the opportunity to schools and school districts beyond Virginia.” Working together, CEE and United Negro College Fund aim to strengthen STEM education across the nation and bring life-changing opportunities to students.

presented by **Kevin Cong**, Exeter, New Hampshire; **Amber Luo**, Stony Brook, New York; **Dheepthi Mohanraj**, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; **Michelle Park**, Solon, Ohio; and **Ella Wang**, Chandler, Arizona. The top five oral presentations selected by the judges were given by **Meenakshi Ambati**, Charlottesville, Virginia; **Frank Liu**, Newton, Massachusetts; **Donald “DJ” Liveoak**, Allen Park, Michigan; **Amber Luo**, Stony Brook, New York; and **Michelle Park**, Solon, Ohio. **Dr. Ross Grossman**, a Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) Trustee and retired SVP, Human Resources, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc., presented \$1,000 scholarship awards to each of the 10 awardees on behalf of Regeneron.



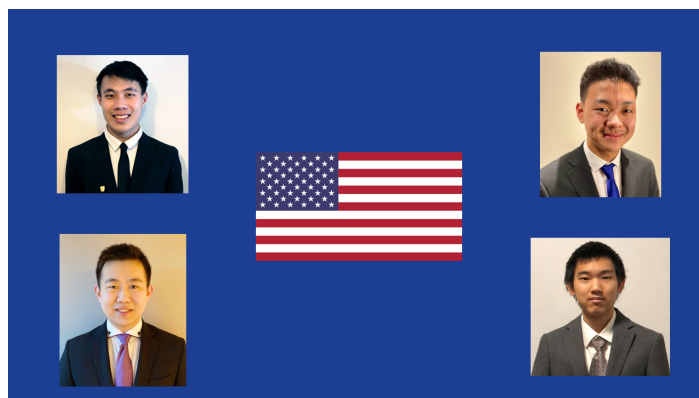
Isabella Quan, a student from Westlake High School, Austin, Texas, was chosen by her RSI peers for the top honor—Rickoid of the Year. The award recognizes academic acumen, leadership, and personal demeanor, and is named for the late **Admiral H.G. Rickover**, father of the nuclear Navy and a founder of CEE. To date, nearly 3,000 scholars, representing every U.S. state and 56 nations, have participated. RSI remains cost-free to all students competitively selected to attend.



Dr. Jamie L. Wells, MD, FAAP, (RSI '91) served as Director of RSI. As an adjunct professor at Drexel University's School of Biomedical Engineering, Science and Health Systems, Jamie helped to spearhead the nation's first degree program in pediatric engineering. Dr. Wells is an award-winning Board-certified physician. She is Founder & Chair of the Yale Alumni Health Network as well as a member of The Leadership Council of The Wistar Institute, the nation's first independent biomedical research facility. She has been interviewed on major media outlets as a medical expert and is deeply committed to educating, mentoring and career advising the next generation. Under her direction, RSI brought together top U.S. and international high school students for the intensive, six-week summer program that provided students with the opportunity to conduct original, cutting-edge research. A video of the 2021 RSI closing convocation is on [CEE's YouTube channel](#).

USA BIOLympiad

All four members of the 2021 USA Biolympiad (USABO) Team were awarded medals in the virtual 2021 International Biology Olympiad (IBO) Challenge II. The students represented the U.S. after winning the 2021 USA Biolympiad National Finals, held virtually by CEE.



Gold medalists were **Judson Lam**, Naperville North High School, Naperville, Illinois, and **Albert Zhang**, North Hollywood High School, North Hollywood, California. Silver medalists were **Derek Chen**, Belmont High School, Belmont, Massachusetts; and **Greycen Ren**, Adlai E. Stevenson High School, Lincolnshire, Illinois. Nearly 9,000 students from approximately 500 schools, 42 states, and eight international schools registered for the national high school exam.

Registration is now open for the 2022 USABO. With school registration, teachers gain access to a wealth of online biology resources, including recommended readings, study guides, practice questions, checklists, and previous exams to help students prepare for the Olympiad. USABO is a series of exams that demands the very best of students in biology theoretical and laboratory knowledge. To register for the exam, visit www.usabo-trc.org. School registration closes on December 10, 2021, and individual student registration closes on December 22, 2021.

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Happy Holidays and Grateful Thanks to All of Our Friends and Supporters!

RSI, USABO, and TEP are the gifts that keep on giving. Alumni of CEE's programs enjoy years of camaraderie, including college recommendation letters, professional opportunities with major and cutting edge corporations and networking events throughout the United States. CEE's commitment to nurture careers of excellence and leadership in science and technology continues to prosper with your help! Contributions to the Center are tax-deductible. Your gift can kindly be made online at www.cee.org/donate, by phone (703) 448-9062, or mail to: Center for Excellence in Education, 7918 Jones Branch Drive, Suite 700, McLean, VA 22102. CEE is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.



In a meeting at Pearl Harbor in the early 1960s, Rear Admiral Roy S. Benson, one of the Navy's top wartime submarine commanders, recalled Rickover saying, "You and I get along very well, better than I do with others. How do you account for that?"

Benson responded, "Each of us renders unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," to which Rickover asked, "Which am I?"

USABO (CONTINUED)

“The USABO is a community, and the thousands of students who take the exams share similar passions. USABO connects students across the country. They may encounter each other at some point in their lives and they already have this important common interest,” said **Michelle King**, PhD, Manager of the USA Biolympiad.

USABO is pleased to continue its partnership with Art of Problem Solving to conduct virtual semi-finals. The partnership modernizes the process by eliminating paper forms.



Congratulations to **Jason Zhang** (USABO '18 & '19), who was a 2019 IBO Silver Medalist and remains one of USABO's strongest supporters. In 2020, he was a key player for the development and implementation of the first virtual USABO Semifinal Exam and the first virtual 2020 National Finals. In 2021, he was again crucial to development and implementation of the second virtual USABO Semifinal Exam and National Finals as a Lead TA, instructor, exam developer, scorer, and question writer.

TEACHER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM



Teacher Enrichment Program

The CEE Teacher Enrichment Program (TEP) connects rural and urban high school teachers to experts from industry and academia with meaningful professional links to benefit underserved students. TEP events and resources, including Bite of Science workshops and the online Lab Bench, are provided cost-free to teachers in 10 states and the District of Columbia for them to access and use in the classroom. To date, nearly 4,000 teachers from nearly 1,400 schools have participated. After each TEP session, teachers are provided resources to take back to their classrooms. The program has reached more than 675,000 students to encourage STEM careers.

TEP is hosting a new monthly virtual series of “The Square Root of STEM” webinars on the second Tuesday of each month from 5-6 p.m. ET. Webinars will explore a variety of topics that illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of STEM and real-world applications of STEM skills. Webinar topics include disease sniffing dogs, space engineering, the science of sports, agriculture and technology, and more. Educators, guidance counselors, students, and the public are invited to join in an exploration of how STEM topics and skills intersect with our lives. A recording of the first webinar, “Super Snouts: The Olfactory Excellence of Man’s Best Friend” is posted on [CEE’s YouTube channel](#).

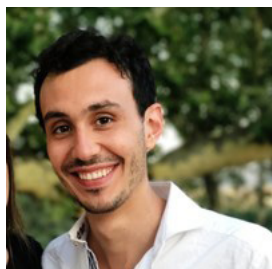
DAVIDSON FELLOWS

CEE applauds the RSI alumni named 2021 Davidson Fellows. Awards annually recognize outstanding students 18 and under who have completed significant work in science, mathematics, technology, literature, music, philosophy, or other subjects. Congratulations to **Meenakshi Ambati**, RSI '21, \$50,000 Scholarship Recipient, Charlottesville, VA; **Angelin Mathew**, RSI '20, \$25,000 Scholarship Recipient, Davie, FL; \$10,000 Scholarship Recipients: **Owen Dugan**, RSI '20, Sleepy Hollow, NY; **Ashwin Sivakumar**, RSI '21, Pasadena, CA; **Kaien Yang**, RSI '20, Annandale, VA; 2021 Davidson Fellows Honorable Mentions: **Kenneth Choi**, RSI '20, Ridgefield, CT; **Andrei Mandelshtam**, RSI '20, Irvine, CA; and **Shruthi Ravichandran**, RSI '20, Westlake, OH.

U.S. PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS

Six RSI alumni and one USABO alumnus are among the high school seniors named U.S. Presidential Scholars for their accomplishments in academics, the arts, and career and technical education fields. The Commission on Presidential Scholars selects honored scholars annually based on their academic success, artistic excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts combined with evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals. The following RSI '20 alumni are members of the 57th Class of U.S. Presidential Scholars: **Owen Dugan**, Sleepy Hollow, NY; **Gregory Li**, Spanish Fort, AL; **Marvin Li**, Salisbury, MD; **Rohan Kanchana**, Hockessin, DE; **Khushi Kohli**, Overland Park, KS; and **Erik Wang**, Providence, RI. **Michael Zhao** (USABO '20), San Jose, CA, is also a U.S. Presidential Scholar.

CEE ALUMNI ACCOLADES



Karim Atiyeh (RSI '06) is Co-Founder, CTO at Ramp. He earned a Baccalaureate in Mathematics from French Collège Notre-Dame de Jamhour, and a B.A. in Electrical and Computer Engineering and an M.S. in Computer Science

from Harvard where he was a Siebel Scholar.



Nathaniel Thomas, PhD (RSI '06) is Founder & CEO at Redwood Research. He holds dual bachelor's degrees in Mathematics and Physics from MIT, a master's degree in Mathematics with Merit from University of Cambridge, a

Master of Science (MSc) in Computer Science from University of Oxford, and a PhD in Physics from Stanford University.



Francis Chong, PhD (RSI '87) is Senior Director of Emerging Markets and Singapore-India Partnership at the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Singapore. He graduated with a B.Sc. (Hons) in Chemistry from the California Institute of Technology before earning his M.Phil. and D.Phil. in International Relations from

University of Oxford.



Peter Khalifah, PhD (RSI '91) is professor in the Department of Chemistry at Stony Brook University. He holds a joint appointment in the Chemistry Division at Brookhaven National Laboratory. He earned a B.S. at Duke University, a PhD from Princeton University, and he was a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

at Oak Ridge National Laboratory and a Lecturer at the University of Massachusetts.



Margarita Krivitski (USABO '07) is a Principal at TPG Strategic Capital based in San Francisco. Prior to re-joining TPG in 2021, Margarita was a Vice President at ValueAct Capital. She was previously an associate at TPG Capital focused on healthcare investments. She started her career as an investment banking analyst at Goldman Sachs. She received her A.B. in Applied Mathematics in Economics from Harvard College.



Dr. Elizabeth Fouts-Palmer (USABO '03) is an anesthesiologist at Weill Cornell Medicine and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital. She also is Assistant Professor of Clinical Anesthesiology - Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell University. She earned a B.A. from Swarthmore College and an M.D. from Weill Cornell Medical College, Cornell

University.



Miling (Yan) Harrington, PhD, J.D. (RSI '01) is an Associate at Covington & Burling LLP in New York, NY. She advises clients on a broad range of transactions in the life sciences and technology sectors. She received a B.S. in Engineering and Applied Science-Environmental Engineering from CalTech and received a PhD in Microbiology and Immunology from Stanford University. Yan received a J.D. from Columbia Law School.

CEE ALUMNI REUNIONS

CEE continues to organize virtual reunions for RSI and USABO alumni. The events not only help the Center connect with alumni lost through the years, but they are a wonderful opportunity for alumni from the U.S. and other nations to network. Many participants say they've never joined any kind of reunion before and their participation is particularly exciting. **James Schuyler**, a 1988 Rickoid and CEE's Webmaster & Alumni Liaison, is leading this initiative. Please contact him at jschuyler@cee.org if you can volunteer time to assist in this project.

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HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR WEEKEND



CEE is celebrating the holiday season with virtual events. On Friday, December 17, 2021, from 5-6 p.m. EST, alumni will participate in virtual gatherings with Mrs. D and RSI and USABO class alumni in breakout rooms! On Saturday, December 18, at 2 p.m. ET, enjoy a chess tournament. Alumni RSVP [online](https://www.cee.org) or email **James Schuyler** (RSI '88) at jschuyler@cee.org.

ABOUT CEE

The Center for Excellence in Education nurtures high school and university scholars to careers of excellence and leadership in STEM and encourages collaboration between and among leaders in the global community. CEE sponsors the Research Science Institute, the USA Biolympiad, and the Teacher Enrichment Program. Founded in 1983 by the late **Admiral H.G. Rickover** and **Joann DiGennaro**, President of the Center, the organization's programs help keep the U.S. competitive in STEM and encourage international collaboration with scientific and technological leaders in the global community.

CEE's programs are open to students and teachers, at no cost to them, regardless of race, color, creed, or economic background.

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