

STEM NOLA Teams with Obatala Science, CellSpring to Expose Students to Careers and Medical Research at Biotech Startups

In an extraordinary experience, 12 New Orleans teens will learn about stem cell research and tissue engineering from biotechnology professionals

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [STEM NOLA](#) is proud to partner with [Obatala Sciences](#) and [CellSpring](#) to engage at least a dozen high school students from the greater New Orleans area in a series of courses that will expose teens to careers in biotechnology startup companies. This extraordinary program focuses on providing high school students with exposure-rich, hands-on opportunities to engage deeply in work in the realm of STEM.



Dr. Calvin Mackie

Over the course of three Saturday sessions on May 8, 15 and 22, students will receive comprehensive lab exposure to the work at both companies involving tissue engineering, stem cell research (stem cells isolated from adult fat tissue), and preclinical evaluation of potential therapeutics. Students will learn the route that new medicines and treatments take to the clinic and the steps that ensure they are safe. Further, students will learn the role that tissue engineering plays in improving the testing of new drugs.

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“We are exceedingly grateful and incredibly proud to partner with both Obatala Sciences and CellSpring to expose our future innovators to the advancements being

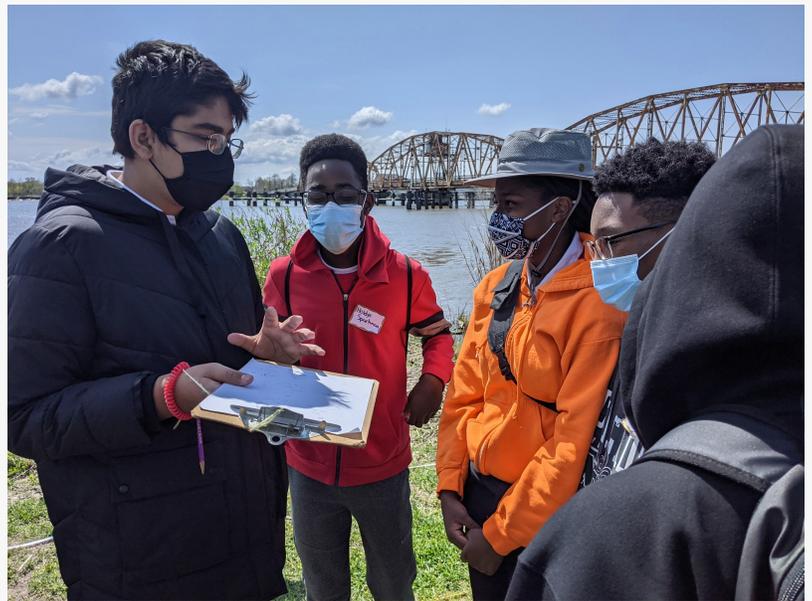
made in biotechnology research,” said STEM NOLA CEO Dr. Calvin Mackie. “This type of engagement with professionals who do this work on a daily basis is life changing. It will continue building on the interest and promise these students have already shown in STEM fields.”

Dr. Mackie, a former tenured Tulane Engineering professor, founded STEM NOLA in 2014 to expose, inspire and engage communities in learning opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The award-winning programming designs and delivers activities, programs and events. Since 2014, STEM NOLA has engaged more than 65,000 students - mostly underserved students of color - in hands-on STEM project-based learning.

“Obatala welcomes this opportunity to advance STEM NOLA's core mission and promote STEM education in our community,” said Obatala Sciences Chief Scientific Officer, Dr. Jeffrey Gimble. “We are excited to have a chance to instruct and learn from the next generation of home-grown scientists recruited from our local high schools. By investing in their future, we are guaranteeing that biotech companies like ours will have a pipeline of talent to draw on in years to come.”

Obatala Sciences' CEO, Dr. Trivia Frazier, agreed, saying, “We are proud to work with STEM NOLA on this project and are excited to see Dr. Mackie's continued progress building this organization.”

Founded in 2017, Obatala Sciences is a biotechnology company that offers research products and services to scientists in medical industries and academia with the goal of advancing tissue



engineering and regenerative medicine. Obatala makes high-quality products that researchers use to discover better therapies for diseases like obesity and diabetes that significantly impact the human population.

CellSpring develops blood tests to screen at-risk patients for cancer with the goal of significantly shifting the timing of a diagnosis to earlier stages. CellSpring's tests are based on a proprietary technology that effectively 'tricks' cancer cells into revealing the molecular makeup of small particles, called exosomes, that secrete into the blood. "We are proud of the work that STEM NOLA does to bring exposure, access, and opportunity to young innovators," said Dr. Christopher Millan, CellSpring CEO. "I am thrilled to have this chance to contribute to that work, and collaborating with good friends at Obatala."

Dr. Queralt Vallmajó-Martín, CELLSpring's postdoctoral researcher, added, "I'm very excited to share with NOLA high school students our passion for science and introduce them to the fascinating world of biomaterials and stem cells. Our goal is to spark inspiration in these students to discover the unknown and see that the scientific world has a great deal to offer for personal and professional development. Looking forward to our Saturdays together!"

(To interview Calvin Mackie, contact Michael K. Frisby, mike@frisbyassociates.com or 202-625-4328.)

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