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CHSP faculty member, student honored at Innovation Awards

College improves lives through innovation

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What do Google, Intel and the OHIO College of Health Sciences and Professions all have in common? They are all examples of organizations committed to innovations that improve lives.

While concepts born within the College are perhaps not as well-known as the "Google Spoon" or the Intel Connected Wheelchair, they are nonetheless life-changing.

At the March 31 Innovation Awards, a ceremony that recognizes creative innovation throughout Southeast Ohio, the College of Health Sciences and Professions proudly congratulated both a student working on global health initiatives and a faculty member for their first-place wins in developing innovations that advance business and technology in the region.

Noah Rosenblatt is an Ohio University Honors Tutorial College student majoring in business administration who has a strong interest in global health matters. He is leading a team working to develop a sustainable system for fighting malaria in Guyana. According to his finalist biography, the system relies on eucalyptus trees to repel mosquitoes and carbon nanoparticles to decontaminate water sources. His team won this year's OHIO Global Health Challenge sponsored by the College of Health Sciences and Professions.

"I was (and) am extremely surprised to have won this award," Rosenblatt said.

"I've never really won anything before in my life, so this is a first. I couldn't have done it without my team, the true winners of the award: Seth Baker, Morgan Stanley and Katherine Clausen."

Rosenblatt, Baker, Stanley and Clausen plan to implement their system in Guyana, where they will travel in August with fellow students and faculty. The team is especially excited about having potential partners and investors interested in their innovation, and hope to patent the product to widen their market.

Rosenblatt said that he enrolled in a Global Health course as a result of last year's challenge, but had not previously taken any health sciences and professions courses.

"I personally became interested in global health matters after working with a friend of mine back in high school who created a handheld (device) which can detect malaria. The opportunities and experiences of the GLC, (Global Leadership Center), only added to that interest."

Also recognized was Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders Dr. Brooke Hallowell, who has developed an Eye Tracking Comprehension Assessment System (ECAS).

Her system, which received funding from the National Institute of Health, allows comprehension to be measured in people with neurological disorders or injuries, even when they cannot communicate.

"It was a phenomenal and highly unexpected honor to receive this award," Hallowell said. "My hope is that the recognition brings attention to the value of our eye tracking technology to discover much more about vital intact cognitive and linguistic abilities in people with neurological challenges."

Hallowell shared her research at a Science Cafe, a program run by scientific research society Sigma XI, in the Front Room of Baker University Center in the fall. She explained that eye tracking can be useful for those who have suffered a traumatic injury, such as a stroke.

She described it as a way to “harness” people’s thoughts when they cannot verbally communicate them.

“I see this as recognition not of me personally, but of a community that is so wonderfully supportive of translating research into real life-enhancing applications,” Hallowell continued.

“We have been able to accomplish this through wonderful help from TechGrowth Ohio, the OU Technology Transfer Office, Dean Randy Leite, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, terrific colleagues and students in Communication Sciences and Disorders, collaborators at LC Technologies, Inc. and a host of research participants.”

According to CHSP Dean Randy Leite, the work of these innovators is a perfect example of the pioneering spirit the College promotes.

“We congratulate both Dr. Hallowell and Mr. Rosenblatt in discovering innovative solutions to problems encountered by many people. Their initiatives serve as fine examples of our commitment to preparing professionals whose work reflects the highest standards of collaboration, ethics, innovation, and commitment to all, especially underserved individuals and populations.”

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