

BAYER FOUNDATIONS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

Talented individuals with inventive spirit

The Bayer foundations support talented individuals in science, education and social innovation. The focus is on people who are using their pioneering spirit and good ideas to help society. The foundation sees itself as a catalyst and platform for networking people from completely different fields. At the "Bayer Science Teens" science camp in the United States, for example, student teacher Andrea Szyska gained fresh impetus for her own subsequent teaching career.

The human musculoskeletal system is one of nature's miracles. But how exactly do muscles work? The current "Bayer Science Teens" participants at the science camp in Colorado explored this using clay. Based on the movements of their own bodies, the students from Germany, India, Africa and America tried to reconstruct and understand how humans move. They used clay to model muscles on a plastic skeleton, which helped the 14- to 17-year-olds to grasp human anatomy.

24-year-old student teacher Andrea Szyska from Aachen in Germany took part in the "Science Teens" camp despite leaving school many years before. She went on a scholarship from the Bayer Germany Scholarship program at the special invitation of the Bayer Foundation in what was a unique opportunity to gather valuable practical experience in the United States.

"I was looking for ideas that I could use later in my lessons," she says. And she found some. "It was incredibly exciting to see how the international teams of young people approached their tasks and solved them together," says Szyska. Her most important lesson? "People learn best when they find things out themselves." She aims to pass on what she learned at the Science Teens camp to her own students later. "Everything from the teaching methods for medical subjects to the organization of the camps taught me things I never learned at university," she says.

These are exactly the kinds of projects that inspire Thimo V. Schmitt-Lord, Managing Director of the Bayer Foundations. "Our programs are aimed at helping pioneers and talented people to think laterally – to encourage them to turn their own life situation into an innovative place and to become inventors." Szyska is a perfect example, with her ambition to bring new teaching and learning methods into her biology lessons. And as a "talented individual with inventive spirit", she is in good company. The Bayer Foundations have been sending scholarship holders on research and social projects

since 1923. The foundations cover two areas: the Bayer Science & Education Foundation supports life sciences, education and medicine, while the Bayer Cares Foundation focuses on social innovations and involvement. "Our winning projects have to move things forward," explains Schmitt-Lord. "Our aim is to support people with vision." This might be scientific research projects, new responses to social challenges or projects in the education sector.

To encourage the younger generation, for example, the Bayer Science & Education Foundation regularly sends students with an interest

A special day for scholarship holders is the "Bayer Alumni Dialog Day". The meeting is held once a year, and this year the topic is "The world is a better place thanks to science." It brings current scholarship holders together with previous participants, Bayer researchers and outside scientists. "This is where social innovation meets scientific excellence," says Schmitt-Lord. It gives the participants the opportunity to build up a network of like-minded people. "The meeting enables them to discuss advanced ideas that could help us work together to move society forward," explains



Scholarship holders in conversation: the Bayer Alumni Dialog Day is held once a year. The participants can engage in interdisciplinary dialog and establish networks.

in natural science to the "Bayer Science Teens" camp that Szyska also took part in. Together, the young people conduct research and experiments on medical and scientific subjects. Every year, a total of around EUR 1 million flows into scholarship programs of the Bayer Foundations for "talented individuals with inventive spirit".

Schmitt-Lord. And what could be a better way of doing so than to support young people the way Andrea Szyska will soon be doing as a teacher. ■