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Contact: Donna Scott-Martin

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301-699-3500, ext. 6152

The Library & NINDS Promote Brain STEM for Area Youth

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) partnered with the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke/NIH (NINDS) to present programs promoting neuroscience education and awareness to students in Prince George's County. Brain STEM NINDS-NIH Library events were packed with students eager to learn more about what's going on inside one's head. Participating branches to date include Bowie, Largo-Kettering, Oxon Hill and Spauldings.

Two brain-centric topics, recommended for ages 9-14, were covered on separate occasions at the above branches. The first presentation was on neurons (brain cells). The related craft consisted of making neurons out of marshmallows, pretzels and candy. Exploring concussions was the topic of the second presentation. Students were challenged to protect their *egg-brains* from injury during the hands-on activity. More than 300 students have attended the Library's Brain STEM events so far.

NINDS representatives included David A. Jett, PhD, Michelle D. Jones-London, PhD, Lauren Ullrich, PhD and Samantha L. White, PhD. Dr. Jett emphasized the importance of wearing bike helmets while bike riding with the youth at the Largo-Kettering Branch as part of his presentation. When students were asked by Dr. Jett, if they wore their helmets when riding their bikes, the response was a unanimous, "no." As Dr. Jett pointed out on his colorful bar chart more concussions occurred in the sport of cycling than any other sport. Football was the second leading sport with concussion injuries. Dr. Michelle D. Jones-London encouraged these potential future scientists to look at the statistics and wear their bicycle helmets. To reiterate this message, the students made helmets to protect their *egg-brains*.

"The partnership with NINDS and PGCMLS has been a rewarding experience. An important goal that NINDS and NIH seek is to grow the pool of diverse scientific researchers. This is vital to our science enterprise and the NIH research mission – we need the brightest minds and best talent from all groups. As we have seen the level of curiosity, engagement and just excitement during the scientific talks and experiments, I think we may have met some future neuroscientists during these visits," Dr. Jones-London said.

It is still not too late to get in on the Brain STEM action. The final Brain STEM program in this series will be held at our Hyattsville Branch Library on Monday, February 22, 2016 at 5 pm. Take advantage of free NIH/NINDS brain resources such the ones handed out during this series: *Know Your Brain* and *Brain Facts*, available for parents, students, and teachers at <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/education/>.

About The Prince George's County Memorial Library System

The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS), consisting of 19 branches, offers strategies for lifelong learning. Library STEM activities include STEM-tastics, STEM for Families, Crazy 8s Math Clubs, Minecraft, 3D printing, Makerspaces, DREAM (Digital Resources for Electronic Applications in Media) lab and more. Other resources are: Ready 2 Read Centers, ABCmouse, AWE Early Literacy Stations, Beanstack, Lynda.com, Brainfuse's JobNow, OverDrive, Inc., FastPencil, hoopla digital, Freegal and Zinio. All these services are free with your PGCMLS library card. Library programs offered are: Storytimes, Read to Rover, Meet the Author, Teen Advisory Board (TAB), Chess Clubs, MAC: Manga and Anime Clubs, and so much more. For additional information, visit our website at www.pgcmls.info.

About NINDS-NIH

The NINDS, which is part of the National Institutes of Health, is the nation's leading funder of research on the brain and nervous system. The mission of NINDS is to seek fundamental knowledge about the brain and nervous system and to use that knowledge to reduce the burden of neurological disease. To learn more about the NINDS, go to www.ninds.nih.gov.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's medical research agency, includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIH is the primary federal agency conducting and supporting basic, clinical, and translational medical research, and is investigating the causes, treatments, and cures for both common and rare diseases. For more information about NIH and its programs, visit www.nih.gov.

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