Gatton Student – Regeneron Finalist

VFTH

3/11/21

A senior at the Gatton Academy is making history this week by being one of forty finalists in the nation’s most prestigious science and math competition.

Amy Bingham talks to him in this week’s View from the Hill.

“Jason Zhang of Bowling Green says he wanted to attend the Gatton Academy ever since he visited during a fourth grade field trip. Fast forward to his senior year and Jason’s groundbreaking research is putting his beloved school on the map.

“In my research I discovered a sustainable chemical reaction that can create a variety of useful pharmaceutical compounds.”

Yes, you heard right. Seventeen-year-old Jason Zhang is conducting research that can play a huge role in medications. “

“Like the anti-depressant monosprin, using a compound called a photocatalyst. “

Heady stuff for a high school senior who found out in January that he was among forty out of more than 17 hundred entrants to reach the finals of the storied Regeneron Science Talent Search.

“I feel thankful of the Gatton’s resources letting us have access to labs and having college level courses.”

The scholars were judged on their project’s scientific rigor and their potential to become world-changing scientists and leaders.

Jason’s research even has a sustainability component.

“Previous attempts at creating this compound used more toxic materials like gold or rhodium metal which produces a lot of waste and that’s not good for the environment but in my research I eliminated the need for those wastes by using blue light instead.”

The pandemic only underscored Jason’s desire to take his fascination with chemistry as far as he can.

 “It brought to the forefront more research on science and tackling diseases is necessary and we all felt that.”

With plans to pursue a PhD, Jason is looking forward to a future of world changing research.

 “I hope to be like a professor and continue this discovery of new drugs and new methods to cure diseases, that’s a big thing I want to do.”

Jason will present his project virtually on Sunday and the Regeneron awards ceremony will be livestreamed on March 17th.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

The forty finalists are competing for more than 1.8 million dollars in awards.

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