



**THE NEW HAMPSHIRE ACADEMY OF SCIENCE**  
P.O. Box 378, LYME, NH 03768  
501(c)(3) FEDERAL TAX ID #46-5758781  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upper Valley Students to Represent NH and VT at International Science Fair

- Two New Hampshire Academy of Science (NHAS) students earn entry into The Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) with research done at the NHAS.
- Cecilia Sweeney and Adithya Puninchittaya will be representing VT and NH respectively at ISEF, a highly competitive international event.

LYME NH, March 29, 2022

The New Hampshire Academy of Science (NHAS) sends two students to the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) as winners at the New Hampshire Science and Engineering Expo and the Vermont STEM Fair. Cecilia Sweeney, a senior at St. Johnsbury Academy, and Adithya Puninchittaya, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Bedford High School, have qualified to present original scientific research at a prestigious international competition alongside the top high school students from around the world. ISEF will take place in Atlanta, GA May 7 – 13.

Cecilia's research centers around using microscopy to detect microplastic particles in soil. In addition to being named an ISEF Finalist, she also won prizes from the US Metric Association and the Association for Women Geoscientists. She completed her research in the new physical sciences lab at the NHAS STEM Center in Lyme, NH. She will be attending Tufts University in the fall and anticipates majoring in engineering.

Adithya's work looked into the ability of different SARS-CoV-2 variants to infect other species using protein modeling. Adithya won 3<sup>rd</sup> best in the fair and 1<sup>st</sup> place in Biology as well as the NH Society of Professional Engineers Award. This summer Adithya will be continuing his research with the NHAS as a participant in our Applied Scientific Research program.

The NHAS sponsors an Extended Learning Opportunity research program at Lebanon High School that sent 11 students to present at NHSEE. Baden Schifferdecker and Ellen Wolstenholme won 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Chemistry for their work on the effect of light on a synthesized carbon dioxide sensor. Kayla Rickrode and Lillian Schnack won a Stockholm Junior Water Prize for their project analyzing the effects of microplastics on the aquatic model organism *Daphnia magna*.

This NHAS STEM research is supported by a Science Education Partnership Award (SEPA) program from the National Institute of General Medical Science (NIGMS) of the National Institutes of Health. Additional support comes from The Couch Family Foundation. NHAS has teamed up with Fairbanks Museum and Planetarium and Canterbury Shaker Village to offer similar programs at those museums this summer.

The New Hampshire Academy of Science is a non-profit focused on enabling secondary school students to perform authentic scientific research and present that research to the broader community. They operate a lab in Lyme NH on the campus of Crossroads Academy that is solely for middle and high school students and their teachers. NHAS scientists also work with teachers and students across NH and VT to expand access to real scientific experiences.