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Vertex Awards Two First-Generation College Students Full Scholarships to the University of Massachusetts

Boston Public High School Students Hannah Mei and Sayed Shah Receive Vertex Science Leaders Scholarship to Pursue STEM Degrees at UMass

BOSTON--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- [Vertex](#), Boston Public Schools (BPS) and the University of Massachusetts today announced the recipients of the annual Vertex Science Leaders Scholarship, a four-year, full-ride scholarship to pursue an education in Science, Technology, Engineering or Math (STEM) at any University of Massachusetts campus. The scholarship is part of a broad STEM education program established by Vertex to equip students for careers in STEM through hands-on learning and mentoring opportunities.

This year's scholarship recipients are Sayed Shah from the Boston International Newcomers Academy and Hannah Mei from the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science. Both students are first-generation immigrants and college students who have witnessed firsthand the powerful impact that careers in STEM can have.

"These scholarships are about our ability to help change the lives of young people through opportunity to higher education," said Jeffrey Leiden, M.D., Ph.D., Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Vertex. "Students like Sayed and Hannah are the future leaders of innovation in science and medicine, and we're delighted to help provide the opportunities they need to develop their talent and succeed in a STEM career."

"I thank Vertex for recognizing the strong talent within the Boston Public Schools," said Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "These students are dedicated and eager to learn the skills that will make them successful in our current and future economy."

Sayed has been involved with Vertex's STEM program for the past year, regularly visiting Vertex's Thomas M. Menino Learning Lab with his class. Both Hannah and Sayed are interning at Vertex this summer so they can apply their passion for using science to solve tough problems and improve people's lives.

"Life can be hard, but sometimes hardship gives you the solutions," wrote Sayed in his scholarship application essay. After his home district in Pakistan lost access to electricity, Sayed activated lessons from his physics and math classes to create a water-powered electric motor, allowing his family to eat dinner in the light. Sayed realized the potential of his education to make an impact and now plans to study computer engineering at UMass Amherst.

Similarly, Hannah's focus on pharmacology was spurred by a personal connection to cancer. Hannah realized she could channel her love of science into developing lifesaving medicines to help people with cancer and other diseases. She plans to study biochemistry at UMass Amherst.

"Sayed and Hannah have demonstrated great initiative and determination in the face of extraordinary personal challenges, and I'm proud to welcome them to the University of Massachusetts," said UMass President Marty Meehan. "UMass is committed to giving hardworking students access to a transformative education and preparing them to thrive in the Commonwealth's innovation economy."

Vertex's comprehensive STEM program and partnership with Boston Public Schools began in 2012. In addition to the Vertex Science Leaders Scholarship, these programs include:

- | **Thomas M. Menino Learning Lab** - A 3,000-square-foot classroom and laboratory space that provides local students and teachers the opportunity to work alongside Vertex scientists to conduct experiments with cutting-edge technologies. More than 1,000 students attended science classes or workshops in the Learning Lab this year.
- | **High school and college internships** - Students gain real-world professional experience and exposure to careers in STEM. This summer, approximately 35 high school students and 100 college students will join us for internships in our labs and across the business.
- | **Science Fair Mentorship program** - Students are paired with a Vertex mentor and receive guidance on science

fair projects at the school, city and state level. In Spring 2017, 21 Vertex mentors spent more than 500 hours working with students on their projects.

- 1 **Community partnerships** - Over the last five years, Vertex has developed strong relationships with organizations like Bottom Line, Hack.Diversity and i2 Learning to expose students to STEM opportunities at every point along their educational journey — from grade school to graduate school.

"This partnership with Vertex is a true example of one that provides students college- and career-ready skills in the innovation sector," said BPS Superintendent Tommy Chang. "Not only is Vertex helping foster our future leaders, they are embracing the multi-cultural lenses that Sayed and Hannah bring to the table. I am so proud of these students, as well as the other award recipients, for their continued dedication and hard work."

Vertex also granted three \$1,000 awards to scholarship finalists. Florcey Bouquet from the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science will attend UMass Amherst, and Madison Park Vocational High School graduates, Taija Reverdes and Evelyn Rosario will be attending UMass Dartmouth and UMass Boston, respectively.

About Vertex

Vertex is a global biotechnology company that aims to discover, develop and commercialize innovative medicines so people with serious diseases can lead better lives. In addition to our clinical development programs focused on cystic fibrosis, Vertex has more than a dozen ongoing research programs aimed at other serious and life-threatening diseases.

Founded in 1989 in Cambridge, Mass., Vertex today has research and development sites and commercial offices in the United States, Europe, Canada and Australia. For seven years in a row, *Science* magazine has named Vertex one of its Top Employers in the life sciences. For additional information and the latest updates from the company, please visit www.vrtx.com.

About the University of Massachusetts

The University of Massachusetts is a five-campus public research university system renowned for the quality of its academic programs, the scope and excellence of its research, and the strength of its public service mission. UMass provides access to high-quality, affordable education that advances knowledge and improves the lives of the people of the Commonwealth, the nation and the world.

About Boston Public Schools

The Boston Public Schools (BPS), the birthplace of public education in the United States, serves nearly 57,000 pre-kindergarten through grade 12 students in 125 schools. BPS is committed to transforming the lives of all children through exemplary teaching in a world-class system of innovative, welcoming schools. We partner with the community, families, and students to develop in every learner the knowledge, skill, and character to excel in college, career, and life.

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