

June 18, 2009

Governor Baldacci Honors Two Promising Youth Science Leaders

Jennifer Leach of Bangor High School and Sylvia Talbott of Lake Region High School in Bridgton selected for prestigious National Youth Science Camp

AUGUSTA – Governor John Baldacci recognized students Jennifer Leach of Bangor and Sylvia Talbott of Bridgton in his State House office Thursday. The two have been invited by Governor Joe Manchin III of West Virginia to participate as delegates to the nationally-acclaimed and highly-selective National Youth Science Camp held near the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at Green Bank, West Virginia. They were selected as promising young scientific leaders in Maine’s 2009 high school graduating class.

“I am proud of you and impressed by your achievement,” the Governor told the students. “We need more students going into science, technology, engineering and math. This is going to be a great experience for you.”

Leach graduated this year from Bangor High School where she participates on the Literary Magazine, the Academic Decathlon, the school newspaper, the math team, indoor and outdoor track, and varsity soccer. Among her academic achievements, she was a participant in the Engineering Summer program sponsored by the Maine Pulp and Paper Foundation and has been awarded a full scholarship to the University of Maine by the Maine Pulp and Paper Foundation. Leach is also a member of the National Honor Society, and received the Sophomore Award of Excellence, and the Girl Scout Silver Award. Outside of School Leach does community service through the Queen City Club and Mechuwana Methodist Church and participates in Girl Scouts and Premiere Soccer.

Talbott graduated this year from Lake Region High School where she has participated in varsity Cross Country, Cross Country Skiing, indoor and outdoor varsity track and field, student council, the National Honor Society, math team, Coffee Talk Book Club, Ripple Effect Youth Leadership Camp, Rotary Youth Leadership Camp, and drama. Among her academic achievements Talbott has received the Maine Principal’s Association Principal’s Award, the Daughter of the American Revolution Award, the Advanced Placement Award for Academic Excellence and the Anatomy and Physiology Award for Outstanding Achievement. Talbott has also conducted independent research on bacterial DNA. Outside of school Talbott volunteers as part of the International Order of the Rainbow for Girls and works at a local restaurant. She will attend Northeastern University in Boston this fall, and plans to study biology.

Anita Bernhardt, the Maine Department of Education’s science content specialist and coordinator for the National Youth Science Camp application process in Maine, said the students are high achievers in science, had great recommendations from their teachers and are very involved in their schools and communities. She said the application is rigorous, and applications undergo a thorough review by a review panel.

“It is exciting that we have talented young people in the state of Maine interested in pursuing careers in science at a time when the areas of science, technology, engineering and math are so important to our society and to the economy,” Bernhardt said.

Established in 1963 as a part of West Virginia’s Centennial Celebration, the National Youth Science Camp is an annual summer forum where two delegates representing each state exchange ideas with leading scientists and other professionals from academic and corporate worlds. Lectures and hands-on research projects are presented by scientists from across the United States who work on some of the most provocative topics in science today - topics such as fractal geometry, the human genome project, global climate change, the history of the universe, the fate of our rain forests, and robotics. Delegates to the NYSC are challenged to explore new areas in the biological and physical sciences, art, and music with resident staff members. Delegates also present seminars covering their own areas of research and interest.

The National Youth Science Camp’s diverse academic program is complemented by an outdoor recreation program, which leverages the Science Camp’s location in the Monongahela National Forest. The Science Camp’s outdoor program offers backpacking, caving, rock climbing, mountain biking and kayaking.

Leach and Talbott will be flown to Charleston, West Virginia, on Wednesday, July 1, and will return home on Saturday, July 25, 2009, after participating in this innovative educational program. The National Youth Science Foundation, based in Charleston, West Virginia, covers all expenses, including travel. More information is available online at <http://www.nysf.com/> and www.nysc.org .

Contact:

Anita Bernhardt | Science and Technology Specialist | 207-624-6835 / 207-215-0713

David Connerty-Marin | Director of Communications | 207-624-6880 / 207-831-3313

Full-size photos from the event may be downloaded at:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/news/images>