



For Immediate Release

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Huntington's Disease Society of America Announces Winners of 2018 Donald A. King Summer Research Fellowship

*Scientists working at Amherst College, Western Washington University and University of Central Florida
awarded fellowships to work on Huntington's disease*

New York, NY (April 24, 2018) -- The Huntington's Disease Society of America (HDSA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2018 Donald A. King Summer Research Fellowships, a vital program to train the next-generation of scientists with research expertise in Huntington's disease. Huntington's disease is a rare, hereditary neurodegenerative disorder affecting approximately 30,000 Americans.

After rigorous review by the HDSA's Scientific Advisory Board, four young scientists were awarded 2018 Donald A. King Summer Research Fellowships.

- **Mr. Jacob Friedman** (University of Central Florida) will spend the summer working with Amber Southwell, PhD using stem cells from male HD gene carriers to determine if a father's age affects CAG expansion.
- **Mr. Ethan Smith** (University of Central Florida) will also be working under the guidance of Amber Southwell, PhD on a project that aims to clarify how the huntingtin protein makes its way to the cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) of HD mice.
- **Mr. Wes Solem** (Western Washington University) will be working in the laboratory of Dr. Jeff Carroll to characterize a new HD mouse model that lacks huntingtin in its fat tissue.
- **Mr. Scott Song** (Amherst College) will spend the summer working at Stanford University in the laboratory of Yanmin Yang, MD, PhD to investigate the function of calcium channels in HD cell cultures.

HDSA established the Donald A. King Summer Research Fellowship program in 2005 in honor of Donald King who passed away in 2004. Don was a tireless advocate for HD families and served as HDSA's Chairman of the Board from 1999 to 2003.

The purpose of this fellowship program is two-fold: first, to attract the brightest young scientists into the field of Huntington's disease research and second, to facilitate meaningful HD research to clarify the biological mechanisms underlying HD pathology. Applicants are evaluated by the quality of their personal academic achievements, mentoring plan, experimental design, and the feasibility of achieving their scientific goals in a short summer timeframe.

Fellows present the outcomes of their projects to the HD community the summer following their award at the HDSA Annual Convention. The 33rd Annual HDSA Convention, featuring the 2017 Donald King Fellows, takes place June 7-9, 2018 in Los Angeles, CA. Visit www.HDSA.org for more details and to register.

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Huntington's disease is a fatal genetic disorder that causes the progressive breakdown of nerve cells in the brain. It deteriorates a person's physical and mental abilities during their prime working years and has no cure. Every child of a parent with HD has a 50/50 chance of inheriting the faulty gene that causes the disease. Today, there are approximately 30,000 symptomatic Americans and more than 200,000 at-risk of inheriting the disease.

*The symptoms of HD are described as having ALS, Parkinson's & Alzheimer's – **simultaneously**.*

The Huntington's Disease Society of America is the premier nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of everyone affected by HD. From community services and education to advocacy and research, HDSA is the world's leader in providing help for today and hope for tomorrow for people with HD and their families.

To learn more about Huntington's disease and the work of the Huntington's Disease Society of America, visit www.hdsa.org or call (800)345-HDSA.