

## News Release

# DFHS Senior Arjun Chatteraj Wins First Acorda Scientific Excellence Award of the 2015-2016 School Year

**Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. December 3, 2015**—Dobbs Ferry Science Research student Arjun Chatteraj received the school year's first Acorda Scientific Excellence Award for his research on the ability of styrene, a chemical found in foam food containers, to migrate into the food we eat. The goal of his research was to assess the level of safety in using these containers with certain food types, temperatures and durations.

The Acorda Scientific Excellence Award <http://www.acorda.com/about/scientific-award> was created to encourage young people to pursue careers in STEM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Math). Acorda Therapeutics, a biotechnology company based in Ardsley, has partnered with WGCH AM radio and The Lisa Wexler Show to showcase Westchester area students and their amazing scientific talents. One student per week is selected to receive the award during the academic year and the winning student is interviewed by Ms. Wexler on her radio program. The program airs Saturday mornings on AM 1490 WGCH.

According to Chatteraj, his research focused on styrofoam or polystyrene containers that are universally used in restaurants, cafeterias and for take-out food, among other uses. Chemically, he explained, styrene has been reported by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a “reasonably anticipated human carcinogen” and associated with numerous human health hazards. His research project calculated the quantities of the leached styrene from the styrofoam material under real-life conditions, and compared the transferred amounts to the recommended FDA limits to estimate the level of safety of using such containers.

“Arjun is planning to study math or statistics next year in college and he has utilized those analytical and deduction skills throughout his investigation,” said Erica Curran, the High School's new science research teacher. “It's been rewarding to watch him bring his research project to fruition and he deserves to be recognized for his hard work.”

Presently, there are 40 students in the Dobbs Ferry Science Research program, including 13 seniors. Dobbs Ferry High School's Science Research Course, which was first introduced in 2007, has produced three Intel Science Talent Search Semi-Finalists, an ISEF Finalist, a Semi-Finalist in the prestigious Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology, and six Acorda Science Excellence Award winners, among multiple other honors. Up next is the Westchester/Rockland Junior Science Humanities Symposium (WesRoc JSHS) in February, followed by the Westchester Science & Engineering Fair (WESEF) in March.

The goal of the Dobbs Ferry Science Research Program is to provide students with the opportunity to conduct authentic and original scientific research of their own choosing, as part of their High School experience. This is a three-year course of study, beginning in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and is geared toward students who are passionate about science. Students team up with a mentor in developing a project that ultimately culminates in an in-depth research paper.

**For more information, please contact:**

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