

August 21, 2009

Milton Straus  
Sentience Foundation  
100 Spruce Street  
Freehold, NJ 07728

Dear Mr. Straus,

As a mother of one of Muhlenberg College's young Brain Camp participants, thank you and the Sentience Trustees for your support of the Muhlenberg College Brain Camp. In high school, my son studied the basic sciences – Biology, Chemistry, Physics—but the only neuroscience (so to speak) he was exposed to was in AP Psychology. The camp showed the students up close and personal what neuroscience is and how useful it is. And, as a single mom, a camp of this caliber – dissection, instruction, lab and research – would have been financially prohibitive.

But beyond the obvious, do you realize the connections these young students have made? Students from all walks of life, different nationalities, and at different steps in the college search process were brought together by a mutual love and curiosity of neuroscience. Today's technology has allowed these new "colleagues" to keep in touch. There are pictures from camp (including their research posters) on Facebook. They are finding places centrally located to meet for dinner. They are comparing notes on the college search process. And, the thing that really makes me smile is that at least 10 of the 24 have planned a "Brain Camp Reunion" next summer at Muhlenberg College, if it continues, when the summer 2010 campers present their research!

And, who are some of these 10, the faces you helped and who you may see eight years down the road at future neuroscience meetings? There is a young man from a financially challenged city who suffers from spina bifida. The Brain Camp experience focused his academic and career goals towards neuroscience. He realized during the Camp that his difficulties in life have made him want to study nerve regeneration and the brain. There is the foreign exchange student from Latin America. The product of two doctors, he is actively searching for a college in the United States where he can study neuroscience. Brain Camp created such a passion for neuroscience in him, that he has already gone back to Muhlenberg College to meet with both of his Brain Camp advisors! His father is scheduling a visit to Allentown so they can tour the campus – and possibly apply to Muhlenberg. And, there is the financially challenged AP Psychology student who was so intrigued from what he learned in his high school class he just had to learn more about how the brain works. His psychology teacher recommended him for Brain Camp. After reporting back to her after camp she has now asked him to come and speak to her high

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school classes next year about his experience and neuroscience. Suddenly, a simple major in Biology looks boring and he is exploring neuroscience. I could go on and on.

So, thank you. I know the students got to thank you at the luncheon, but not all the parents had that opportunity. And, while these 16 and 17 year old students are smart, I don't think they can truly fathom what they have been given (especially during these difficult economic times). Your support made a difference and created a passion and excitement you don't always get to see. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura".

Laura  
(Parent of Brain Camp Participant, Christopher)