

Biotech Partners has changed my life

by José

Over the summer of 2011, I was an intern at Bayer HealthCare at Mission Bay in San Francisco where I had the opportunity to work with incredible scientists, which was an amazing experience. Working with my mentors, I learned three different laboratory techniques that are used in the beginning stages of the development of medicine that will in the future help patients with Hemophilia.



I chose the Biotech Academy to gain a broader knowledge of the science field. Biotech Partners actually wants to change the lives of students and

“I will be the first in my Mexican-American family to graduate high school.”

teach them that education is the key to succeeding in life!

I will be the first in my traditional Mexican-American family

to graduate high school, go to college and pursue my dreams.

Biotech Partners helped me realize that I have to push forth to get the education I need and want. BELIEVE ME! I have been pushed forth by the program to obtain the best grades possible in order to go to college. Although it is difficult, it is definitely worth it.

Biotech Partners has made an enormous impact on my life because now I know that in the real world you have to work for what you want and it is worth it because you will be able to say you did it.

I'm extremely grateful to be a part of this program, and I hope that kids in the future will be able to experience this opportunity.

José is a senior in the Biotech Academy at Berkeley High School. This article is adapted from the speech he made at **BRAVO!**, Biotech Partner's annual celebration of student accomplishments.

Biotech Partners wins national award

Biotech Partners won the prestigious Innovations in Life Sciences Prize in the Ashoka/Changemakers national Partnering for Change Competition. This award recognizes Biotech Partners for “an innovation that promotes partnerships between scientists and science educators at middle and high schools in the life sciences.” Eight organizations from an initial pool of 265 applicants from across the nation were awarded prizes by a judging panel that included Caroline Kennedy and Bruce Alberts, Ph.D., past President of the National Academy of Sciences.

BRAVO!

This past August, Biotech Partners saluted and honored its summer interns and mentors, high school graduates, and BCI graduates at the annual, newly renamed BRAVO! event. The event begins with the summer interns' poster presentation and competition. An esteemed panel of judges of biotech industry professionals, educators, funders, and government representatives reviewed the posters and presentations, and winners were announced at the ceremony. Biotech Partners' graduation and internship completion ceremony followed. Featured speakers included BCI graduates, high school graduates and interns. In all, 50 students were awarded certificates for their respective accomplishments.

From top: Intern Luis explains his anesthesia project to Biotech Partners' board member Dick Thomas; intern Sylvia with Oakland Tech principal Sheilagh Andujar, Program Director Meghan Colgan, and Berkeley High principal Pasquale Scuderi; intern Michael shares his poster with judge William Wesley of Full Life Balance Books & Seminars; rising senior Giselle shares her internship experience at the ceremony; BCI graduates Belle Smith and Lawrence Rawlins. (Photo Credit: Mark Estes)



Biotech Partners fosters academic excellence and life opportunity

Established in 1992, Biotech Partners believes that all youth can succeed in life if provided with opportunity, support, and motivation. Our mission is to help youth from populations underrepresented in the sciences navigate the worlds of work, school, and life through a biotechnology-focused curriculum, including job training and internships, that provides access to fulfilling well-paid careers in bioscience and increases opportunities for higher education. Biotech Partners currently offers two components: 1) the Biotech Academy for high school students beginning in their junior year; and for Academy graduates who qualify 2) the Bioscience Career Institute (BCI), a certification program that requires successful completion of community college courses in conjunction with co-op employment in the biotech industry.

Biotech Partners' students win Bayer scholarships



Selma

Congratulations to Evanney Salisi and Selma Verdin-Romo, Bioscience Career Institute students who were awarded two of this year's three Bayer Junior Board Scholarships. Upon completing BCI certification, Evanney plans to earn a Biomedical Engineering or Biotechnology degree before medical school. Selma is a first generation college student. In addition to working at Bayer HealthCare and taking classes at Berkeley City College to receive her certificate, she is also completing the requirements to be a Fast Response Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). Her plan is to research more about treatments and cures for cancer.



Evanney

for Hernandez clan, Biotech Partners is a family affair

When Juan Hernandez entered the Biotech Academy this fall as a junior at Berkeley High School (BHS), he became Biotech Partner's first second generation student, and the fifth in his family to enroll in the program. His mother Griselda received her Bioscience Career Institute (BCI) certification in 1999 and for the past six years has been working at Bayer HealthCare on next generation hemophilia medicines.

Three of Griselda's siblings have also graduated from the Biotech Academy at BHS. The eldest sibling Roberto was one of the first Biotech Academy students in the early days of the program. He worked at Bayer HealthCare in Berkeley for 15 years and currently works at Novartis in Vacaville. Their younger brother Jesus also graduated from the Biotech Academy and is attending community college while working full-time to support a new baby. Elvia, the youngest, is currently a second-year BCI student, attending Peralta Community Colleges and working part-time at Bayer HealthCare Mission Bay as a research assistant. Her future goal is to earn her BCI certification and transfer to a four-year institution to pursue a degree in bioengineering.

L to R: Juan, Elvia, Griselda, Roberto, Jesus



The Hernandez family emigrated from Mexico to make a better life for the children, but faced many challenges, including irregular unemployment for the parents. As neither parent graduated from high school, they saw Biotech Partners as an opportunity for their children to succeed in school, the professional world, and life.

Juan wants to follow in his mother's footsteps and pursue a career in the pharmaceutical industry, as well as attend a four-year college after completing BCI certification. He would also like to become a professional soccer player.

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Raul* leaves gang to enroll in the Biotech Academy

After spending his freshman and sophomore years floundering in school as a gang member, Raul entered Biotech Partners' junior class with a tentative desire to change his future. The first quarter was a particular challenge for him. He struggled to juggle both academic and gang worlds, and take care of a younger sibling. Raul had a particularly difficult time understanding how school could benefit his life and future; he neglected his homework and was frequently absent. However, he still wanted to do something positive with his life.

At the end of the first semester, with support from Biotech Partners staff, he chose to "jump out" of the gang (which he knew meant—and resulted in—being physically attacked by other gang members). Subsequently, Raul's grades began to improve—from D's and F's to A's and B's. To keep himself on track during his most vulnerable times, he joined an after school program.

He wanted to do something positive with his life!

His determination and hard work paid off; at the end of his junior year, Raul qualified for a summer internship, which he tackled with enthusiasm and knowledge. In fact, at a site with many interns, most of whom were "hardest working intern of the summer!" four-year college students, his mentor called him the "hardest working intern of the summer".

Currently a senior, Raul is taking Biotech 3 & 4, as well as completing an independent study in Geometry in order to graduate in June. After graduating, he hopes to enroll in Biotech Partners' Bioscience Career Institute and then transfer to a four-year college to pursue employment in a medical field.

*Name changed to ensure privacy.

Congratulations to Clay (BCI '10)



While still a BCI student, Clay co-wrote with his mentor, Biotech Partners' Board member J. Mark Carter, and several other scientists at the USDA the article *Microbead-Based Immunoassay for Simultaneous Detection of Shiga Toxins and Isolation of Escherichia coli O157 in Foods*, which was published in the **Journal of Food Protection, Vol. 74, No. 3, 2011**. Clay is the first Biotech Partners student to be published and has come a long way from being, in his own words, "an unmotivated high school student" until he joined the Biotech Academy. After he received his BCI certificate, Biotech Partners secured a position at the USDA for Clay while he continues to study at Laney College.

"My son William was given the opportunity to participate in the Biotech Academy and Bioscience Career Institute. This opportunity charged and re-directed the trajectory of his life. He is now gainfully employed at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, with enough income to take care of himself, and help his mom out sometimes. I am super grateful to Biotech Partners because you have done what I could not as a low-income parent -- give my hard-working brilliant child an opportunity to show his worth and be compensated for it. Thank you!"

Janny Castillo, parent of a 2008 Bioscience Career Institute graduate