



For Immediate Release
July 27, 2007

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Harlem Children Society Science Boat Cruise around NYC: Celebrating future of science & technology for under resourced & underserved High school and Undergraduate students in the HCS Science & Technology Research program

New York, NY – On Friday, August 3, 2007, Harlem Children Society (HCS) will be hosting a science boat cruise departing from Pier 59 at Chelsea Piers at noon. The cruise will last approximately four hours going around NYC. Over 250 HCS students – mostly from high school (all from extremely impoverished and underserved backgrounds; 97% students are minority – mostly black, Hispanic and American Indian and over 65% are young women), mentors, educators and parents will attend. The goal of the fair is to celebrate our students, their families and mentors who work extremely hard in their research and internship in science, engineering and math with HCS. They will get to know one another and also showcase some of their creative talent in science and society – bringing science, arts and culture in unique ways.

HCS is a New York community based organization, founded in 2000 by Dr. Sat Bhattacharya, a cancer research scientist at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, that provides scientific education to under-resourced and under-served, yet gifted high school and undergraduate students. Each student, drawn from a wide range of public schools, is provided with a mentor in the science community, including doctors, professors, engineers, and more. **They are given the chance to perform high profile one-on-one research with reputed scientists, engineers and doctors in over 75 institutions like Cornell, Columbia, NYU, Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Mt. Sinai, and many others, with first-rate equipment and materials – which they would never be able to do in school. They also attend weekly workshops and lectures by leading experts at Cornell University Medical Center. More than 230 students from over 65 schools [most (~210) in New York City; some spread out across the US from Camden in NJ, Detroit in MI, New Orleans in LA, to several Indian reservation across the country – including several in the Hopi reservation in AZ)] were inducted into the program in late June this year.** Students were selected from well over a thousand applications, and these are some of the smartest students in many scientific fields. HCS is touching all four corners of the earth, and hopes to expand exponentially for the next several years - and has started a pilot program in several countries where there is a dire need of science education like in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Columbia, and others.

Students perform research in a myriad of scientific and engineering fields – such important subjects as Celiac Disease, cancer treatment therapy, HIV/AIDS, neurological activity in the auditory system, environmental, nanotechnology and much more. Students interested in astronomy and space engineering have also been sent to the NASA at Kennedy Space Center in Florida and in University of Wisconsin Madison.

This year's HCS class began its summer session in late June. In addition to full-time laboratory work, New York students attend a lecture every Tuesday at the Cornell University Medical Center. They hear a variety of experts speak about their professions, providing insight into important current issues. So far an educators from UNESCO & UNICEF, a professor of chemistry at Bronx Community College, a producer of National Public Radio's *Science Friday*; and soon to be followed by other luminaries like Nobel Prize winning scientists will expand the horizons in these young minds. Students also present their projects during the lectures, keeping everyone aware of their progress in their laboratories.

On August 3rd, most students will take a break from their extremely intensive and highly demanding summer research program, and set sail on a cruise around Manhattan. There will be a gourmet buffet, music, and a dance floor. Students will be able to talk, mingle, dance, look at the New York skyline, and more. The students will also be broken up into groups and compete in a talent show, showing their skills in acting, singing, or whatever will entertain their peers. It will be a lovely afternoon, giving the students a chance to really get to know one another, and make lifelong friends.

About Harlem Children Society:

Harlem Children Society is a nonprofit organization that aims to develop a society for a better humanity by creating awareness in scientific literacy and social issues. Harlem Children Society is a 7 year old summer "bridge program" that provides paid one-on-one internships at leading scientific and medical institutions like Cornell, Columbia, NYU, Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Mt. Sinai, and many others for select high school students (grades 7-12, and beyond) from low-income areas in New York City and the tri-state area and nationally. Students are paired with mentors, who are top professionals in their field, and train and research on specific projects. The program identifies under-resourced and under-served communities, targets at-risk children and youth in those communities and provides them an opportunity to explore the world and their future through science, thereby helping to revitalize the community as a whole.

Over the past 7 years, HCS has grown exponentially – **increasing enrollment from 3 students from 2 high schools guided by one mentor in 2000 to over 230 students from 70 schools, guided by over 200 mentors in 60 leading research institutions this year (2007). All students come from extremely impoverished and underserved backgrounds; 97% students are minority – mostly black, Hispanic and American Indian and over 65% are young women.** All students receive a substantial stipend for their research. HCS's rate of success is exemplified in the number of former students who have gone on to top colleges, including **Columbia, Rutgers, Dartmouth, Penn State, UMDNJ, Swarthmore, Cornell and other universities.** **Over 20% of HCS students continue their education in IVY league universities, and most of them opting for science and math. In addition, Harlem Children Society has been honored for its level of accomplishment with many awards, including, several New York Times Scholarships, Gates Millennium Scholarships, and Posse scholarships, among several others.**

Harlem Children Society Founder, **Dr. Sat Bhattacharya**, who has earned his reputation as a research scientist, at the renowned Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, says that this cruise "is keeping the dream alive in Harlem that science can be fun and exciting and that all children should have access to the knowledge that prepares them to be successful entrepreneurs and productive world citizens". He has been honored by the New York Academy of Sciences during Black History month as a leading educator in minority education in the sciences, and by New York Daily News as "50 unsung heroes of NY". Dr. Bhattacharya, an immigrant from India, started Harlem Children Society with Harlem in mind, as more than a geographical location; but

as a symbol of the drive to succeed and to achieve your dreams, inspite of the tremendous hardships and circumstances. Harlem Children Society is keeping the dream alive and well, with its dedication to promoting an innovative science education program for children and youth living in under-resourced and under-served communities and school districts. It seeks to empower the youth of tomorrow with the skills to pursue higher education and career achievement and to give back to their communities by becoming innovate entrepreneurs and productive world citizens.