



Partners in Science program brings researchers, teachers together to get students excited about science

October 18, 2017 Scott Gallagher [Education](#) , [Community](#)



Two researchers with the Oregon National Primate Research Center received \$15,000 grants from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, giving two local teachers experience to take back to their classrooms. (Left to right) Shown are Larry Sherman, Paul Donelson, Rachel Stagner, and Henryk Urbanski. (Image courtesy of Murdock Trust)

OHSU is always looking for ways to expose and get kids excited about pursuing careers in science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. Two researchers with the Oregon National Primate Research Center recently received \$15,000 [Partners in Science](#) grants from the [M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust](#) to give two local K-12 teachers real-world experience to take back to their students.

“OHSU’s mission is to give back to our community,” said **Henryk Urbanski, Ph.D., D.Sci.**, professor, divisions of Neuroscience and Reproductive and Developmental Sciences at the ONPRC; and professor of behavioral neuroscience, and physiology and pharmacology, OHSU School of Medicine. “This program is a great way to inspire the next generation of scientists.”

The \$15,000 grants support a two-year program that brings a local teacher and an OHSU faculty member together to work on a research project. Urbanski has been participating in the Partners in Science program for more than 25 years and is currently partnered with Rachel Stagner, a teacher at Madison High School, to study age-associated neuroendocrine changes in the hypothalamus.

“My husband thought I was crazy to give up my summer to work,” said Stagner. “For me it’s like recharging, and it spurs my creativity in the classroom.” Stagner was surprised by how interested she became in the research project and is excited to share her enthusiasm with her students. “I’m practicing what I preach and can really call myself a scientist. It empowers me to talk to my students about science authentically.”

Larry Sherman, Ph.D., professor, Division of Neuroscience, ONPRC; and professor of cell, developmental and cancer biology, OHSU School of Medicine, has been participating in the Partners in Science program for 15 years and has seen the long-term benefits of the OHSU’s outreach efforts and the Murdock Trust’s program.

“I stay in touch with the teachers after the program is over,” said Sherman. “I help them teach their classes, they bring their students to the lab, and I’ve even had some of those students apply to work in this lab.” Sherman is partnering with Paul Donelson, a teacher at Valor High School, on screening modified flavonoids for the promotion of remyelination.

“The importance of the collaboration between OHSU and schools in our local community is essential,” said OHSU President **Joe Robertson, M.D., M.B.A.** “The Partners in Science program equips science teachers with the research experience to implement better practices in their own classrooms.”

The Murdock Trust seeks partners like OHSU because of their outreach efforts to local schools in their community. “Our goal is to improve science education and encourage best practices of teaching to be more inquiry focused,” said **Steve Moore**, executive director of the Murdock Trust. “We are honored to be involved with such a vital program at OHSU.”

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