

# AHS Students Rebekah Blackmon and Elizabeth Blackmon Place In Top 10 In St. Louis Brain Bee Event

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ST. LOUIS - Two Alton High School students - Rebekah Blackmon and Elizabeth Blackmon - placed in the top 10 recently in the first in-person St. Louis Area Brain Bee since the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Washington University in St. Louis welcomed 54 students from the St. Louis region on Feb. 25 for the event. Participants answered questions about the nervous system, brain structure, cognitive disorders, and other topics in neuroscience.

Sanjay Adireddi of Ladue Horton Watkins High School won this year's competition and will compete in the U.S. National Brain Bee on April 21-23. He also has been awarded a summer research fellowship with Brain Bee organizer Erik Herzog, the Viktor Hamburger Distinguished Professor in Arts & Sciences.

“My true passion for science was ignited in the Science Olympiad event and I wanted to continue to learn more about neuroscience,” said Adireddi, who is considering a career in neuroscience research. “Preparing for a competition-style event while also learning cool things about neuroscience was definitely motivating.”

Past St. Louis Area Brain Bee winner and current organizer Sriharsha Gonuguntla, a sophomore studying neuroscience in Arts & Sciences, said the Brain Bee is a great opportunity to meet experts in the field. About 30 Washington University students, researchers and faculty members volunteered for the event, writing and judging questions, leading neuroscience demonstrations and participating in panel discussions.

“As a St. Louisan, I know a lot of the competitors and it’s exciting to see their own interest and knowledge grow,” said Gonuguntla, who won the 2020 competition as a Marquette High School junior.

In addition to Herzog and Gonuguntla, the St. Louis Area Brain Bee is organized by students Daleep Grewal, Jake Joseph, and Arjun Nair with support from Synapse, the university’s neuroscience student group.

### **St. Louis Area Brain Bee Top 10 finalists**

Sanjay Adireddi, Ladue Horton Watkins High School

Gaayathri Binoj, Parkway Central High School

Chinmay Kumar, Lindbergh High School

Ankush Vasireddy, Marquette High School

Anthony Zhao, Ladue Horton Watkins High School

Rebekah Blackmon, Alton High School

Elizabeth Blackmon, Alton High School

Abby Moriarty, St. Joseph Academy

Matthew Awad, Ladue Horton Watkins High School

Diep Tran, Ladue Horton Watkins High School