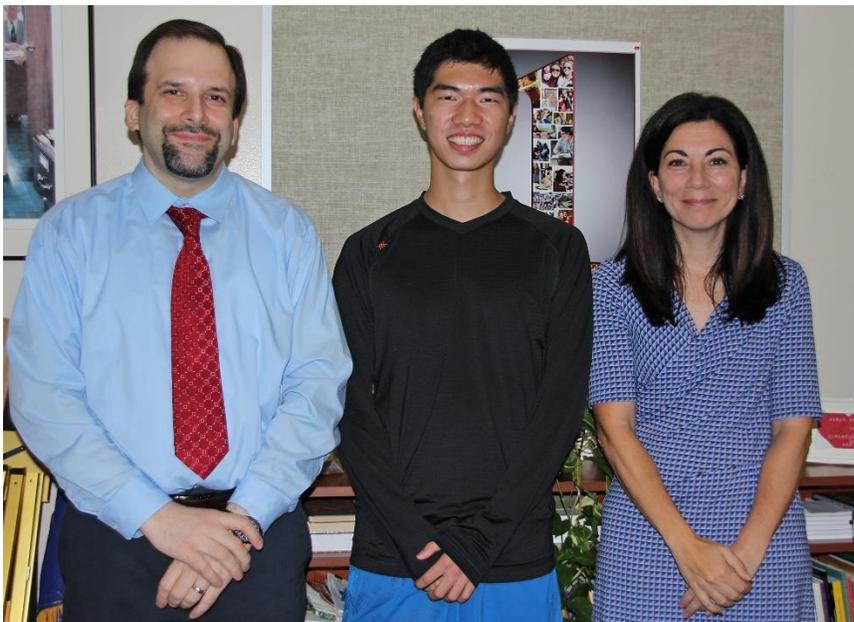


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



Garden City High School Junior is Siemens Semifinalist for Second Consecutive Year!

On October 18th 2016, Garden City High School Junior Brandon Gong, pictured here with science research teacher Dr. Steven Gordon and Principal Nanine McLaughlin, was named a 2016 Semifinalist in the prestigious Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology.

Approximately 2,200 students from 46 states, Washington D.C., and seven international sites entered this year's competition. Only 500 were selected as International Semifinalists. Among this select group of winners are students from specialized magnet schools for math, science & technology, and close to 20 public school districts in Long Island.

Amazingly, this is the second consecutive year Brandon has been selected as a Semifinalist. "I'm relieved, amazed, and very grateful to Drs. Gordon and Zhu," shared Brandon upon learning he was named a Semifinalist. "It's a good feeling to know that all the hours of work have been recognized." Dr. Wei Zhu is a Natural Sciences professor at SUNY Old Westbury. He has mentored Brandon since Brandon began his science research projects in Garden City Middle School.

Brandon's project was entitled: "Reduction of amyloid- β -mediated lipid peroxidation and cytotoxicity by *Helianthus tuberosus* (Jerusalem Artichoke): A potential new disease-modifying therapeutic for Alzheimer's disease." Translation: Brandon and his partner Aric Zhuang from Great Neck South, discovered that leaf extract from the Jerusalem Artichoke reduced the toxic protein amyloid- β in human nerve cells and in fruit flies predisposed to the disease. Research has been focused on amyloid- β since the breakdown of this protein is suspected of playing a major role in Alzheimer's disease.

"It was pretty exciting doing all the prep work for our project," Brandon explained. "We had to tweak the concentrations of the extract to find the most effective solution. Once we had the results for the human nerve cells, we worked with the fruit flies. They also showed a positive amyloid- β reduction, as well as an increase in life span."

"This is the second year in a row that Brandon has been awarded the Semifinalist title," shared Dr. Gordon. "This distinguishes Brandon as the first student in Garden City High School history to have achieved a repeat win in the Siemens Competition."

For more information, please visit: <https://www.siemens-foundation.org/programs/the-siemens-competition-in-math-science-technology/2016-semifinalists/>