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*In hospitals and labs across the city, hundreds of high school students are spending their summer doing work most of them normally wouldn't get to do until medical school. NY1's Lindsey Christ filed the following report.*

Abayomi Are is contributing to prostate cancer research by studying abnormal cell growth. Sumaiya Tasmeen spent three summers researching cancer drug delivery. Now she's working in the Bioimmunology lab at the New York Blood Center. Impressive resumes, especially since Abayomi is in high school and Sumaiya a college freshman.

"I love science. It excites me," says Are.

"In school I want to study more about it. I usually like science but I've gained more interest in science because of the research," says Tasmeen.

Both have had the opportunity to work with scientists each summer thanks to the Harlem Children's Society. It's an organization started by cancer researcher Dr. Sat Bhattacharya, who wanted to get more low income students into his field.

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"I started this about 10 years ago when I noticed un-representation of various minorities in the biomedical sciences, principally at Sloan Kettering, and over the years, over many several years," says Bhattacharya. "So I thought I would do a small little project, take a few students into my lab to do cancer research. And then it started from there, from three students. Last year, we had about 800 students."

High schools recommend students and Dr. Sat interviews candidates, then pairs them with a scientist. But he says the only reason the program has been able to grow, is that so many of his colleagues have volunteered to work with such young students.

"Developing a whole network of scientists, engineers and doctors. And principally tap into the goodwill of people in general in biomedical sciences and the scientific community in general. And there has been a great response," says Bhattacharya.

Abayomi's mentor, Dr. Patrycja Dubielecka, says she understands how important it is to help the next generation.

"I was lucky in my past to have a really good mentorship. So I believe that starting from a very early year in your life, getting a good mentor is important for a student. And I would also like to be a very good mentor," says Dubielecka.

Both Abayomi and Sumaiya say they plan to follow in their mentors' footsteps and become doctors.



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