

"History Comes Alive" in Student Competition

Their "short trip back in time" has gained them a trip to this year's National History Fair. Fourteen-year-old Amy Sullivan and thirteen-year-old Megan Lee, of Lakeside Junior High School, are hoping their project about the "past" will help them in the "future."

After winning second place at the Florida History Fair, the two teenagers, their project, "*Jonas Salk and the Polio Vaccine*," and their teacher, Gwanda Fisher, will now travel to College Park, Maryland. "This is a perfect example of what can happen when students follow directions and go the extra mile," says Fisher.



(Dr. Jonas Salk developed the Polio Vaccine in the 1950s.)

"They can end up at the National History Fair, competing against hundreds of other history buffs from around the country."

It all began when Mrs. Fisher asked her students to choose a project for the Clay County History Fair, based on this year's theme, "Individual and History... Actions and Legacies." "My dad is a doctor and he suggested we do something on medicine," says Sullivan, "and Megan liked the idea since her grandfather is also a physician." So, the two teens decided to showcase the exploits of Dr. Jonas Salk, the man who developed the polio vaccine in the 1950s.

At first, the project consisted of research the teens could find in books and on the Internet... that is until a woman, whose first name is "Pia" contacted them. "I was floored," says Fisher. Pia's last name is Salk... Jonas Salk's niece! "One of the local news stations did a story on the girls' project, which also aired on a television station in California. That's when she, Dr. Pia Salk, called the school and asked to speak with me," says Fisher. "She was very kind and excited about the project. She encouraged the students to email her with any questions, which they did right away."

Sullivan and Lee described the experience as "really neat." "She provided us with pictures and documents that no one else has," says Sullivan and Lee. The National History Fair is June 14-18, 2009.

