

Rutgers Youth Enjoy Science (RUYES) and Oncology Physician Training Initiative to Maximize Diversity (OPTIM) Social Networking Event

By G. Jean-Marie

On Friday, July 8, the Rutgers Youth Enjoy Science (RUYES) Program held a networking event with the Oncology Physician Training Initiative to Maximize Diversity (OPTIM) Program. These programs are offered by the Office of Education and Training at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and seek to develop a sense of community, intellectual stimulation, and career opportunities for STEM focused students in high school, college, and beyond.

Part of the mission of RUYES, beyond intimate lab research experience, is to give participants chances for career and professional development. The program also provides networking opportunities with researchers, doctors, and faculty to eliminate misconceptions about science and medicine.

I am a cohort 2, first-year mentee in the RUYES program. At just 16 years old, I am amazed by the unique experiences given to me by this program and my research mentors.

Unsurprisingly at this networking event, I gained a lot more than just a tasty meal. For someone



like me who is interested in a career in medicine, it was extremely beneficial to hear firsthand from medical students. Additionally, as a high schooler, I received insight into undergraduate and graduate applications, difficulties, and tips for success. This event allowed me to make connections with people

of various ages and education levels and have my questions answered from different perspectives. It was amazing to sit at a table with other STEM driven people who did not at all

mind my never-ending stream of questions and curiosity. We shared appetizers, our passion for science, laughs, and knowledge.

I learned a lot that evening and was assured that while tough, medical school is not impossible if you manage your time wisely. There are wonderful opportunities I will get in college. It was a wonderful opportunity to simply meet new, educationally like-minded people.

I left with a full stomach, heart, and mind stuffed with new knowledge and assurances. As I continue my journey with the RUYES program, I appreciate opportunities like this that open my eyes to careers in STEM and help me see that my dream career is possible.



To learn more about both programs visit the following sites:

RUYES: www.cinj.org/ruyes

OPTIM: www.cinj.org/optim