



For Immediate Release:

Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair Announces John Curtis Christian School Student Has Been Selected as a 2016 National Broadcom MASTERS Competition Finalist

- Rachel Pizzolato, a seventh-grade student at John Curtis Christian School (JCCS), is one of two Louisiana students among 30 national competition finalists
- Finalists were chosen from a pool of more than 6,000 nominated students nationwide
- 30 U.S. middle school students will be awarded an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC to compete for \$100,000 in awards from October 27-November 1



NEW ORLEANS (Sept. 22, 2016) – Greater New Orleans Science & Engineering Fair ([GNOSEF](#)) today announced that Rachel Pizzolato, a seventh-grade student at John Curtis Christian School (JCCS), has been named a national Broadcom MASTERS (Math, Applied Science, Technology and Engineering for Rising Stars) competition finalist. Rachel, who was selected from among 300 semifinalists, is the first-ever JCCS student to be selected for this honor and the first from the Greater New Orleans Science & Engineering Fair (GNOSEF) Region IX. Each of the [30 finalists](#) receive a \$500 cash award and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC in October to compete for \$100,000 in awards. Rachel, who will be accompanied by her father Robert Pizzolato, will compete in a week of team activities and present her project before a prestigious panel of judges. She and the other finalists will also get to meet the President. The other Louisiana student finalist is Ashini Modi of Shreveport.

The Broadcom MASTERS®, a program of [Society for Science & the Public \(SSP\)](#) sponsored by the Broadcom Foundation, is the preeminent national middle school science and engineering competition in the United States and the world. Now in its fifth year, the Broadcom MASTERS (**Math, Applied Science, Technology and Engineering for Rising Stars**) is inspiring middle school students from all walks of life to pursue math and science throughout high school, opening doors to exciting university and career choices in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields. The Broadcom MASTERS awards cash prizes and gifts to all MASTERS nominees and their teachers at every level of competition. National finals are held each fall in Washington, DC, and top prizes include the \$10,000 Marconi/Samueli Award for Innovation and the \$25,000 Samueli Foundation Prize, a gift from the Samueli Foundation.

Rachel Pizzolato was among 300 semifinalists selected from more than 6,000 nominated students nationwide. Her award-winning project is titled: **Can a Modified Windmill Generate Electricity in an Interstate Traffic Setting?** According to Rachel, “I had seen wind farms on family car trips and noticed how much wind whooshes by cars as they drive along highways. This was my ‘Eureka’ moment when I thought about mounting turbines along the sides of the highway to generate electricity.”

Rachel won several awards at the 2015-16 GNOSEF Regional Fair at UNO in February of this year, including:
Overall Grand Sweepstakes Champion for Region IX

1st Place Category Award: Energy: Chemical and Physical
1st Place Special Award: Office of Naval Research
1st Place Broadcom MASTERS
2nd Place Special Award: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
3rd Place Special Award: Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE), Inc. Delta Chapter
Social media award: GNOSEF Twitter contest.

In addition to her interest in science, Rachel, who hopes to become an aeronautical engineer, has won medals for trampoline competitions and gymnastics at both the state and national level. She has also competed in beauty pageants for eight years and won over 50 titles. She hopes to compete in the 2024 Olympics and win Miss USA, but knows that the most important part of her life will be the knowledge she gains by studying and expanding her mind through science projects like the one for which she is being recognized.

The Greater New Orleans Science & Engineering Fair encourages independent student research in science, technology, engineering and math. The Fair is open to students nominated by their middle or high school or home school association within the designated Region IX parishes (Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and Plaquemines). Entrants fall into two divisions: Junior Division is comprised of middle school students (6-8 grade) and Senior Division is high school students (9-12 grade).

More than \$60,000 in cash/non-cash awards, prizes and grants will be awarded to GNOSEF 2016-2017 winners, teachers and schools, including a trip for 4 students and 2 teachers to the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF), which draws over 1600 students from 70 countries with more than \$4 million in cash awards and prizes. Selected category winners at the GNOSEF in New Orleans are also eligible to compete for state honors at the Louisiana Science and Engineering Fair (LSEF) held at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, March 20-22, 2017, also with advancement possibility to the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) to be held May 14-19, 2017 in Los Angeles, CA.

“We are thrilled to have a Broadcom MASTERS finalist from our region competing in Washington, D.C.,” said Annette Oertling, Ph.D., fair director of the non-profit Greater New Orleans Science Fair, Inc. “As educators, this is what we envision for all of the students who compete locally in their schools, then again at GNOSEF and onwards to national competitions like Broadcom MASTERS. We want to nurture their love of science and hope that they will someday channel it into a fulfilling career in the STEM fields.”

To ensure participation in the upcoming GNOSEF in February, schools are encouraged to affiliate by Friday, Oct. 7 at <http://gnosef.tulane.edu/affiliationform.cfm>, so their students can compete in the regional science fair.

The Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair is presented by H. Britton Sanderford, Jr., the Patrick F. Taylor Foundation and Tulane University in partnership with Core Element, University of New Orleans and Women for a Better Louisiana. It is also supported by local industries, foundations and generous individuals.

For more information about the 2016-2017 Greater New Orleans Science and Engineering Fair, February 13-16 at UNO and the subsequent awards ceremony on February 16, visit: gnosef.tulane.edu.

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Editor’s Note: Photo of Rachel Pizzolato courtesy of GNOSEF. Additional images available upon request.