

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

At the sixth annual Brainworks, hosted by Cedars-Sinai's Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute, students will inspect sheep brains, view microscopic samples of various types of tumors, play quiz games, meet researchers, surgeons and care providers, and shake paws with pet therapy specialists who also happen to be dogs. "Many students who do well in science have the potential to excel if they are stimulated, encouraged, and given the chance to nurture their interest," says Keith L. Black, M.D., Institute director. Brainworks takes place Friday, Oct. 24, beginning at 10 a.m.

**ANNUAL BRAINWORKS EVENT STIMULATES STUDENTS' INTEREST IN SCIENCE WITH REAL LIFE EXPERIENCE**

**LOS ANGELES (Oct. 20, 2003)** – Facts and figures in science textbooks may not always inspire a scientific mind. Theories and statistics don't always appear to have practical applications.

Soon, however, 130 seventh- and eighth-grade students from Los Angeles area schools will have an opportunity to see scientific activities and touch technologies that are making a real difference in the real world. Brainworks, the annual program sponsored and hosted by Cedars-Sinai's Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute, will take place Friday, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Students attending the sixth annual Brainworks will see the tools and equipment used in brain surgery, including three-dimensional imaging technology and a "phantom skull" that will allow them to perform virtual surgery. They will have their vital signs taken and find out how these measurements are used in treating patients. They will examine a sheep brain and peer through a microscope at slides of various types of tumors.

Throughout the day, students will meet and hear presentations by researchers, neurosurgeons, patient care providers and other professionals. They will be greeted by pet therapy dogs that assist in patient rehabilitation, and they will participate in games and activities designed to stimulate their minds and reinforce the fact that science can be fun.

To Keith L. Black, M.D., founder of the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute, scientific curiosity comes naturally. The son of two educators, he was encouraged to experiment and question. In his teen years, he befriended research scientists and learned about their work in laboratories. At 17, he earned the Westinghouse Science Award for a research paper he authored.

Each student attending Brainworks will receive a souvenir photo taken with Dr. Black, who today is an internationally recognized neurosurgeon and brain tumor researcher. He and the Brainworks organizers hope the students, many of whom come from disadvantaged communities, will realize that careers in science and medicine can be within their reach.

“From a young age, I had a strong interest in science and numerous opportunities to put it to use. Many students who do well in science have the potential to excel if they are stimulated, encouraged, and given the chance to nurture their interest. Brainworks was created to help fuel that interest, to help steer students toward scientific endeavors, and to show them that the foundation they build now can within a few years provide them with an exciting career that will benefit humanity,” says Dr. Black, who holds the Ruth and Lawrence Harvey Chair in Neuroscience at Cedars-Sinai and directs the Division of Neurosurgery and the Comprehensive Brain Tumor Program.

The Institute is among the nation’s leading centers conducting research to find the genetic links and molecular changes that allow brain tumors to form and grow. Institute scientists are creating novel therapies to attack tumors and to help the body’s immune system track and kill cancer cells. Researchers and clinicians work together to bring these new approaches to patients, translating scientific breakthroughs into patient care and treatment techniques.

All costs related to Brainworks are assumed by the Institute, which also provides a complimentary lunch for the students. Teachers at several independent schools and others in the Los Angeles Unified School District select the students invited to attend.

Cedars-Sinai is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For the fifth straight two-year period, it has been named Southern California's gold standard in health care in an independent survey. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities and its broad spectrum of programs and services, as well as breakthroughs in biomedical research and superlative medical education. It ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities.

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