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Lisa Bernardin, Program Coordinator, Vermont Brain Bee, April 12, 2019



### Vermont Brain Bee

Explore **Neuroscience**

Engage **Students**

[www.vermontbrainbee.com](http://www.vermontbrainbee.com) - [vermontbrainbee@gmail.com](mailto:vermontbrainbee@gmail.com)

### Aidan May Testimony

My name is Aidan May, I am a first year student at the University of Vermont studying biochemistry. For my four years of high school I had the pleasure of participating in the Vermont Brain Bee. As a scientifically-motivated student, I found the Brain Bee to be one of the highlights of my high school career.

I attended Mt. Abraham Union High School in Bristol. Like many other rural schools in Vermont, we worked on a limited budget, and exciting opportunities to explore our interests were rare. The Brain Bee provided such an opportunity. Because of our close proximity to Middlebury College, we were lucky enough to have neuroscience students visit us each week with a presentation prepared and many insights to share about what they had learned about the brain. This model of learning encouraged our group to investigate topics that were of interest to me and other Mt. Abe club members.

I had the pleasure of competing in the actual Brain Bee for my first three years of high school. In my third year of competition, I won the 8th Brain Bee, which was an amazing honor. My years of study and fascination with the nervous system, as well as all of the support I had gotten from my teachers and fellow group members had paid off.

Because I won the VT Brain Bee, I was able to attend the National Brain Bee in Baltimore Maryland in the spring of 2017. Luckily, I got some of my expenses paid by the VT Brain Bee organization. I competed against approximately 50 other high school students from around the United States. Over three days of competition, I got to know some of my competitors, and was exposed to new topics and careers within the field of neuroscience. It was a blast to explore my interests with so many other like-minded students.

Simply put, the Vermont Brain Bee has had a tremendous effect on my life and career goals. As a college student, it has been a guiding factor in my schedule, extracurricular activities, and research interests. The Brain Bee demonstrated the wide variety of career paths that can come from an interest in neuroscience. I am so grateful for how the Brain Bee has shaped my life, and how it continues to shape my future.

