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Biotechnology Institute announces Woman of the Year awardee

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The award, part of the Institute's new BiÃ¢?¢â?¬GENEius Innovators women-in-science mentoring initiative, recognizes a woman in science who exemplifies the goals of the Institute's mission to engage, excite and educate our future young innovators.



Seema Kumar, Vice President of Innovation, Global Health and Science Policy Communication for Johnson & Johnson was named recipient of the Biotechnology Institute’s newly launched 2018 Woman of the Year Award. The award, part of the Institute’s new BiÃ¢?¢â?¬GENEius Innovators women-in-science mentoring initiative, recognizes a woman in science who exemplifies the goals of the Institute’s mission to engage, excite and educate our future young innovators. Drawing from the

Institute’s historic 50% participation by young women in the BioGENEius program, BiÃ¢â?¢â?¬GENEius Innovators brings together Biotechnology Institute alumni and experienced women professionals for two days of formal and informal exchange.

The Biotechnology Institute selected Kumar as its first Woman of the Year in part for her efforts to increase representation of women and young people in the sciences. Today more women graduate with college and university degrees in the U.S. than men, more than twice as many men graduate with degrees in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and globally only 16% of women graduate with STEM degrees. Kumar is helping to change this landscape through the promotion of STEM education and public engagement in science here and abroad, especially in developing countries where there is growing need for innovation in health, sustainability and the environment.

“Seema believes a great idea can come from anywhere, and she has an intense dedication to fostering the very best talent in innovative research no matter who they are or where they’re from,” said Larry Mahan, President of the Biotechnology Institute. “She is an especially strong champion of young scientists via the Institute’s BioGENEius Challenge and Gene Pool Pitch Competition held every year at the BIO International Convention to showcase the research excellence and entrepreneurial spirit of top U.S. and international high school students in healthcare, food sustainability and industrial/environmental applications of biotechnology.”

“Amidst the myriad responsibilities she undertakes for J&J, Seema still finds time to create or support new programs that promote inclusivity in the sciences – especially of youth and women of all cultural ethnicities. This year in addition to participation in and championing the BioGENEius Challenge, BioGENEius Gene Pool Competition and BiÃ¢â?¢â?¬GENEius Innovators program, she announced the launch of an ambitious Johnson & Johnson Champions of Science storytelling program to spotlight innovators from all over the world,” said Jim Greenwood, President of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization.

“Seema truly goes ‘beyond the bench’ to advance inclusive innovation for greater impact on human health,” Mahan added. “We are very proud to name her the 2018 Woman of the Year.”