

Discovery Education and 3M Announce 2016 Science Competition Winner

Maanasa Mendu Awarded \$25,000 and Named America's Top Young Scientist in Nation's Premier Middle School Science Competition for her invention of HARVEST, a device that uses solar and wind power to create energy

[Discovery Education](#) (@DiscoveryEd) and [3M](#) (@3M) have named 13-year-old Maanasa Mendu from Mason, OH the winner of the 2016 [Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge](#) (#YoungScientist). Mendu created HARVEST, a bio-inspired energy device that uses solar and wind power to create energy. This innovation was inspired by a visit to India where she discovered many people lacking basic life necessities such as clean water and lighting. Through her invention, Mendu hopes to provide a globally applicable, cost-effective energy source. Mendu's scientific thinking reflected the competition's goal of applying science to everyday life, creating a solution that will improve lives and strengthen communities around the globe.

Mendu, a ninth grader at William Mason High School in Mason City School District, competed alongside nine other finalists today during a live competition at the 3M Innovation Center in St. Paul, Minn. She was awarded the title of "America's Top Young Scientist" as well as a \$25,000 prize.

During the past three months, Mendu and the other nine finalists had the exclusive opportunity to work directly with a 3M scientist to develop their personal inventions as part of a unique summer mentorship program. Mendu was paired with [Margaux Mitera](#), a 3M senior product development engineer whose research has helped 3M develop new Post-it® Note products. Each of the students collaborated with some of 3M's top scientists, who provided guidance as they worked through the scientific method to advance their ideas from a theoretical concept into a physical prototype. Together, the mentors and finalists shared their passion for science, reviewed the scientific process and worked virtually through pre-assigned objectives, with resources and support provided by Discovery Education and 3M.

During the final competition hosted by Discovery Education Vice President Lance Rougeux, the finalists presented their completed inventions to an esteemed panel of scientists and leaders from both Discovery Education and 3M, including honorary guest judge Trace Dominguez, producer, writer and host of Discovery's DNews!. In addition to presenting their prototypes, the ten finalists paired up to compete in an additional challenge through which they combined multiple 3M technologies to solve a real-world problem.

"Witnessing a new generation of young scientists leverage their passion and knowledge is truly inspiring," said Jon Lindekugel, Senior Vice President, 3M Business Development and Marketing-Sales. "We know these young scientists learn a lot from the 3M mentors they are paired with as they evolve their science innovations over three months of hard work, and the truth is, we always learn from them as well. It reminds all of us at 3M that when scientists come together, they really can change lives for the better."

"Each year, the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge reminds us of the inspiring ingenuity that results when we empower our youngest generation to apply science, critical-thinking and creativity to solve real-world problems," said Bill Goodwyn, President and CEO, Discovery Education. "Discovery Education is honored to stand alongside 3M in congratulating Maanasa and the rest of this year's finalists on their impressive innovations that foreshadow a bright future for our nation."

The remaining nine finalists also received a variety of prizes from Discovery Education and 3M. The second, third and fourth place winners each received a \$1,000 prize and a trip to a taping of a show on Discovery's family of networks. These extraordinary students are:

Rohan Wagh from Portland, OR, a ninth grader at Sunset High School in Beaverton School District, received second place for his innovation that utilizes the natural metabolism of bacteria to create energy.

Kaien Yang from Chantilly, VA, an eighth grader at Nysmith School for the Gifted, received third place for his innovation that uses pumpkin seed oil to create both a biodiesel and bioplastic that reduces emissions and pollution from plastic.

Amelia Day from Sumner, WA, a ninth grader at Sumner High School in Sumner School District, received fourth place for her invention that uses sensory feedback to help rebuild neural connections inside of the brain during rehabilitation.

The fifth through tenth place winners each received a \$1,000 prize and a \$500 Excitations gift card. These finalists, in alphabetical order, are:

Meghna Behari from Swickley, PA, an eighth grader at Marshall Middle School (North Allegheny School District)

Mrinali Kesavadas from Mahomet, IL, a ninth grader at Mahomet-Seymour High School (Mahomet-Seymour School District)

Rohit Mital from Rochester Hills, MI, a ninth grader at Adams High School (Rochester Community Schools)

Sara Makboul from Acworth, GA, a ninth grader at Kennesaw Mountain High School (Cobb County School District)

Sofia Tomov from Knoxville, TN, an eighth grader who is homeschooled

Will Paschal from Madison, GA, a ninth grader at Morgan County High School (Morgan County School District)

Since its inception in 2008, the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in student prizes, paired students with world-renowned scientists to give them real-world insights and delivered much-needed science resources to millions of students, teachers and families across the country. It targets students in the years when research indicates their interest in science begins to wane and encourages them to explore scientific concepts and creatively communicate their findings. Winners have gone on to be featured in *Forbes* magazine's annual "30 Under 30" list, speak in front of members of Congress and attendees at the United Nations, meet the President of the United States, and demonstrate inventions on national television programs such as *ABC World News Tonight*, *Fox & Friends*, and *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

To download hi-res images of the science competition, click [here](#). Video will be available shortly. For more information on the 2016 Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge and to learn more about this year's finalists, go to www.YoungScientistChallenge.com.

About 3M

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<https://news.3m.com/2016-10-21-Discovery-Education-and-3M-Announce-2016-Science-Competition-Winner>