



May/June 2021



tackling today's world of environmental and medical challenges

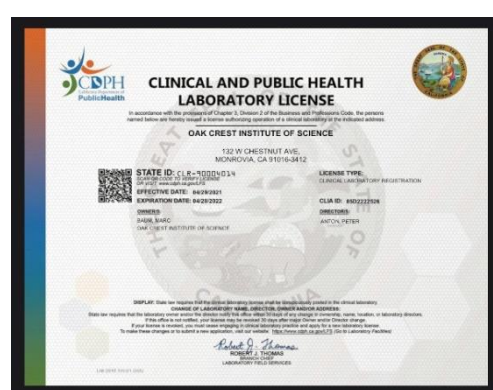
Oak Crest Receives CLIA Certification, Builds Its Pathogen Core

With over 20 years of experience in public health and molecular biology, Oak Crest is pleased to announce our Pathogen Core is busy assisting local projects. This resource is open to the community to assist in the collection, isolation, culturing, and identification of pathogens. To support this developing Core, Oak Crest has applied for and been granted

[Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments \(CLIA\)](#) certification from the California Department of Public Health. The license allows Oak Crest to accept human samples for diagnostic testing from outside sources. This is an important milestone for our Pathogen Core and extends the capabilities we have built through our COVID-19 testing protocol to external partners.



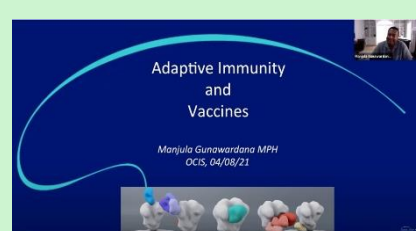
An interesting addition to the [Pathogen Core](#) is the Tick-Borne Pathogen Screening program (TBPS). The program will allow individuals to screen ticks they encounter for common pathogens responsible for Lyme disease, babesiosis, Ehrlichiosis, and more. Simon Webster, Sofia Rivera, and Jess Breslin, working with Manjula Gunawardana, are currently putting the final touches to the testing protocols, so that we can identify tick-borne pathogens in single ticks. Stay tuned for more information!



News & Events

Reaching Out To High Schools with LAUSD

The abrupt pandemic lockdown gave Oak Crest a unique opportunity to get acquainted with local high school students over the internet. A series of online [virtual meetings](#) were rapidly organized to introduce students to Oak Crest, biotechnology, and STEM concepts related to COVID-19 and the environment.



Beginning in early October 2020, and ending in May 2021, the Oak Crest staff presented 15 different STEM talks to over 2,000 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The success of this program was the result of a strong collaboration with the CTE Grant Coordinator and his team at the LAUSD and Oak Crest faculty and staff.

Undergraduate Students Return for In-Person Lab Internships

Oak Crest is excited to welcome students back to the lab for enriching, [in-person lab experiences](#)! Providing students with authentic, hands-on research experience is a major part of the identity of Oak Crest, and we have missed the energy and engagement that they bring to the lab throughout the pandemic.

The student cohort joining us in the lab were enrolled in a joint Oak Crest/Bio-Flex program to prepare for life in the professional world. Through Oak Crest, the students participated in a remote learning course to become familiar with laboratory skills essential for biotech and nanotech jobs. The [Bio-Flex program](#), administered by the South Bay Workforce Investment Board in Hawthorne, offers pre-apprenticeship career pathways for the bioscience industry. The two organizations work together to prepare students for the workplace by teaching soft skills students can use for finding and securing employment, introducing the options open for STEM graduates, and giving specific training in biotechnology.

Oak Crest Fellows
May 2021



After the conclusion of the course, four of the students jumped at the opportunity to join our COVID-19 clinical study and be tested regularly so that they could practice what they learned. The students are shadowing Oak Crest employees and learning essential laboratory skills that will help them as they pursue their STEM degrees.

JRA is Back for Summer 2021

The [Junior Researcher Academy \(JRA\)](#) is back this summer in a new virtual format! The JRA is jointly supported and organized by the Oak Crest Institute of Science and the City of Monrovia, with additional generous support from the [Boston Scientific Foundation](#). The JRA is designed to teach students about science through hands-on experiments guided by researchers in the fields of chemistry, biology, physics, and computer science. The additional support provided by the Boston Scientific Foundation will make it possible for each junior researcher to conduct professionally-designed experiments from home. The 6-week academy is available for students in grades 7-9 and will take place from June 22nd to July 29th. [Click here for JRA Registration and Details](#) and [here for more information on the Boston Scientific Foundation](#).



Microscope Donation to Oak Crest

In May, John Hubacz of [JH Technologies, Inc](#) drove down from Fremont, CA with a van full of microscopes to donate to Oak Crest. The microscopes, some of which are pictured below, will be put to good use in our teaching lab. JH Technologies are pioneers in microscope sanitation techniques, using microscopes in educational programs, and are the West Coast authorized Leica dealer.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Social Media

We are active on social media and encourage you to check out our accounts and participate in our activities. [Donate here to support our efforts!](#)

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Have a question? Contact us at
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