

Dr. Hannah Friedman, Asst Professor of Biology at UCSD awarded a \$15,000 grant from Muscular Dystrophy Association of America, Inc.

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Dr. Hannah Friedman, Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of California, San Diego, has been awarded a \$15,000 grant from the Muscular Dystrophy Associations of America, Inc. (MDAA) to further her work in membrane synthesis in cultured muscle cells.

Ten-year-old Francis "Bucky" Potochnik, MDAA poster child, accompanied by 'Mr. David S. Moore, President of the San Diego County Chapter, presented the award to Dr. Friedman and Chancellor William D. McElroy in a recent ceremony in the Chancellor's Office.

In return, Bucky received a sample of the bioluminescent fluid produced by fireflies on which Dr. McElroy is doing studies as well as a trip to Dr. Friedman's office to look at muscle cells under a microscope.

Muscular dystrophy, which strikes most frequently in young boys, causes progressive weakening and deterioration of the skeletal muscles. As a result the victims of the disease may become completely disabled and confined to a bed or a wheelchair for the remainder of their lives.

In a degenerative disease such as muscular dystrophy, some normal element within the muscle tissue ceases to function properly. Dr. Friedman's work focuses on the muscle cell's surface membrane, the thin layer of material which separates the cell from its external environment. This membrane is constantly turning over, growing and changing.

The mechanism behind this growth and ability to change is still unknown. It is hoped that Dr. Friedman's research will shed light on the processes involved in normal cultured muscle cells. Then, the differences found in the dystrophic muscle will be able to be understood and possibly corrected.

Dr. Friedman received her B.A. from Vassar College and her Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She spent two years doing postdoctoral work in Cambridge, England, at the Medical Research Council Laboratory of Molecular Biology before she came to UCSD in July 1972.

Moore noted that \$54,000 has been allocated to researchers in the San Diego area, and IOAA currently funds research in California totalling \$200,000. Since 1960 the Association has provided \$1.6 million for basic research in the state.

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