

SPARK Alumni

2017: Cohort 1



The SPARK Research Mentorship Program launched in the summer of 2017 with nine scholars in its pilot year.



Devanik Biswas

Stanton College Preparatory School

Devanik was a senior at Stanton when he entered the SPARK program. His research in [Dr. Melissa Murray's Lab](#) on blood-brain barriers earned him First Place in the Biochemistry category of the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) and Third Place Grand Award winner in the category Biomedical and Health Science at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF) in 2018. Devanik is now studying Neuroscience at Johns Hopkins University.



Yara Chehade

Nease High School

Yara was a senior at Nease when she entered the SPARK program. Her research in [Dr. John "Al" Copland's Lab](#) on ovarian cancer earned her an Honorable Mention in the Cellular and Molecular Biology category at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) and an opportunity to compete at the Intel ISEF in May 2018. Yara is now majoring in STEM studies at the University of Florida.



Emma Kee

Ponte Vedra High School

Emma was a senior at Ponte Vedra High School when she entered the SPARK program. Her research in [Dr. Pam McLean's Lab](#) on traumatic brain injury earned her Second Place at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) and Recognition at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) in 2018. Emma is now studying Biology at Wake Forest University.



Tim Kellett

Ponte Vedra High School

Tim was a senior at Ponte Vedra High School when he entered the SPARK program. His research with [Dr. Aneel Paulus](#) on Waldenstrom Macroglobulinemia (WM) earned him Second Place at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) and at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) in 2018. Tim is now studying Biochemistry at Florida State University.



Courtney Krider

Ponte Vedra High School

Courtney was a junior at Ponte Vedra High School when she entered the SPARK program for the first time. Her research in [Dr. Dev Mukhopadhyay's Lab](#) on Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Cells earned her Third Place at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) and Recognition at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) in 2018. Courtney also was awarded Third Place in the Regional Junior Science Engineering and Humanities Symposium.



Louis Otero

Ponte Vedra High School

Louis was a senior at Ponte Vedra High School when he entered the SPARK program. His research in [Dr. Keith Knutson's Lab](#) on HER2+ Breast Cancer earned him Third Place at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF) and Second Place at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) in 2018. Louis is now studying Microbiology at the University of South Florida.



Jonathan Perera

Stanton College Preparatory School

Jonathan was a senior at Stanton when he entered the SPARK program. His research with [Dr. Rachel Sarabia Estrada](#) was on the migratory interactions between Microglia, MSCs, and BTICS in vitro. Jonathan had the opportunity to present his work at the annual Research Presentation for SPARK students and Mayo Clinic Mini Science Fair. He is now studying Biomedical Engineering at Duke University.



Kavitha Vudatha

Stanton College Preparatory School

Kavitha was a junior at Stanton when she entered the SPARK program for the first time. Her research in [Dr. Baoan Ji's Lab](#) on Pancreatic Cancer earned her First Place at the Northeast Florida Regional Science and Engineering Fair (NEFRSEF), a special award from the University of Florida's College of Medicine, and Second Place at the State Science & Engineering Fair of Florida (SSEF) in 2018.



Darren Wang

The Bolles School

Darren was a senior at Bolles when he entered the SPARK program. His research with [Dr. Hugo Guerrero Cazares](#) was on Glioblastoma (GBM) cell proliferation and migration. Darren had the opportunity to present his work at the annual Research Presentation for SPARK students and Mayo Clinic Mini Science Fair. He is now studying Biomedical Engineering at the University of Florida.