Honoring of the 5th anniversary of the congressional designation of April 25 as National DNA Day, we invited Long Island to celebrate and take pride in our history and everyone's future. “DNA is not only part of our history as Long Islanders; it is the foundation for the future of personalized healthcare,” said President Bruce Stillman, who hosted a week's worth of special events on the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL) campus and at the Dolan DNA Learning Center (DNALC).

The campus was decked out with colorful CSHL DNA Day banners, and the feeling of celebration continued through the village of Cold Spring Harbor with banners starting at the public library and stretching all the way down Main Street to the opposite end of town where the DNALC is located!

Regional high schools were invited to the CSHL campus for guided walking tours of the facility. With CSHL scientists as guides, the tours not only explained the historic architecture and the scientific endeavors that have taken place within these buildings, but also provided special, personal insight to the research that is being conducted on our growing campus today in the fields of cancer, neuroscience, and plant biology.

The walking tours continued for the public on April 28, with three special tours added to the regular tour program that runs most Saturday mornings from April through October. Check the schedule on the website and make your reservations (www.cshl.edu). It's an up close and personal treat that you shouldn't miss!

DNA Day was an opportunity to remind the community that research done at CSHL puts this region at the forefront of biomedical research, with significant contributions to the local and regional economy. The medical advances that are possible as a result of the research done at CSHL are bringing us closer to more individualized and more effective diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as cancer, autism, and Alzheimer's. Understanding genetics will help people make more informed decisions about their own healthcare.

For the DNALC, celebrating DNA Day was easy. “Every day is DNA Day at the Learning Center!” exclaimed DNALC Executive Director David Micklos. Indeed, throughout the year, the DNALC hosts a wide range of educational programs about genomics for elementary, middle, high school and college students, and teachers. The DNALC trains teachers around the country and also offers adult education classes. The Cold Spring Harbor Library and Environmental Center, the public library across the harbor from CSHL's campus, also participated in the National DNA Day celebration. Library patrons received specially designed bookmarks and were able to easily access selected books about DNA and related topics. On April 25, the Library also made sure that patrons could link by computer to an online chat sponsored by the National Human Research Institute (NHGRI), a part of the National Institutes of Health which develops special events and programs for DNA Day every year.

The NHGRI website boasts links to CSHL's DNALC website. If you didn’t make this year’s celebration, get ready for next year with some online programs for DNA sleuths everywhere. Here are two programs of particular interest that can be accessed from www.dnalc.org or individually: DNA From The Beginning at www.dnaftb.org and DNA Interactive at www.dnai.org.

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