

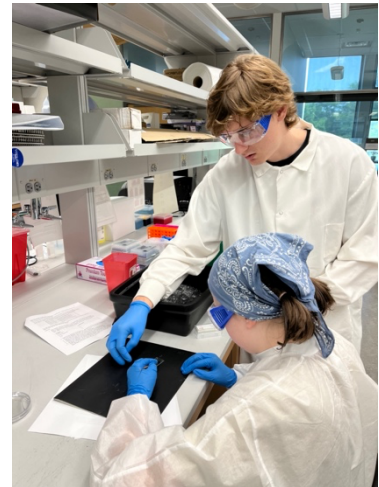
An important part of the Iowa Neuroscience Institute mission is to extend our science into the community and to ensure we are reaching people who can benefit from the resources we have to offer. We have participated frequently in Carver College of Medicine [Mini Medical School](#) events, hosted a [Science on Screen](#) film series with FilmScene, and invited guest speakers to present in public events in addition to scientific seminars.

I had a unique view of a neuroscience outreach program last summer when my son, Seamus, participated in a one-day camp for twice-exceptional (2e) students organized by some of my colleagues. They hosted the program again this month with great success, welcoming high school students with exceptional academic ability as well as a learning or developmental disability from Iowa City, Mechanicsville, and Dallas Center.

Ben Kelvington, a pharmacology graduate student in my lab, had the idea for the camp after participating in the [Summit on the Neuroscience of Twice-Exceptionality](#) that the INI co-sponsored with the UI Belin-Blank Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development in spring 2021. After hearing the panel of 2e students who spoke at the summit, Ben was motivated to empower neurodiverse students in our labs.

He worked with Belin-Blank Center staff, including **Katie Schabilion** and **Eric Field**, to create a framework for the camp, and they helped him recruit participants. He asked others in the INI to participate by offering lectures, lab tours, and mentoring and by guiding hands-on experiments.

Ben received overwhelmingly enthusiastic responses from INI colleagues. “No one says ‘No’ to me about this project,” he said. This represents the supportive environment we are cultivating in the INI. Thanks to all who have participated, including those who have volunteered in both years of the program: **Hanna Stevens, Jake Michaelson, Sarah Ferri, Valeria Cota, Lucy Langmack, Pravda Quinones, Junko Kasuya, Lisa Ringen, and Linda Buckner.**



For these visiting high school students to see first-hand that there is a place for them in science is deeply meaningful. We know that a wide array of perspectives improves our science. We must be intentional about including as many perspectives as possible, and that includes neurodiverse perspectives.

As faculty, we also need to be intentional about giving our trainees space to pursue projects they are passionate about. Fostering this independence and creativity will bolster their academic and lab work and set them on the path to becoming the innovative scientists of the next generation.

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