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MIAMI HELPS AREA TEACHERS PROMOTE NATIONAL DNA DAY APRIL 25

OXFORD, Ohio – Through the support of programs from Miami University’s Center for Chemistry Education, local high school teachers and students will learn about the Human Genome Project, the science of DNA and career opportunities in this field while celebrating National DNA Day April 25. The Center for Chemistry Education and departments of botany and microbiology were one of four groups nationwide that received the first National DNA Day Small Awards, “Celebrating the Science of DNA Day,” from the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) to create DNA Day programs in their communities.

Miami’s National DNA Day project is led by co-principal investigators Arlyne Sarquis, director of the Center for Chemistry Education at Miami Middletown, and Elisabeth Schussler, assistant professor of botany. A DNA Academy was held in January by Schussler and Rebecca Balish, visiting assistant professor of microbiology, for high school teachers to prepare for DNA Day and related outreach activities. Area teachers have implemented creative outreach activities including creating a DNA Day music video with students; a T-shirt design contest to promote DNA Day; and inviting a DNA Day Ambassador from the NHGRI to speak to students.

National DNA Day, established by Congress in 2003, commemorates the successful completion of the Human Genome Project in 2003 and the discovery of DNA’s double helix by James Watson and Francis Crick in 1953. For more information, go to

www.genome.gov/dnaday.

A study by the American Society of Human Genetics (ASHG), recently published in the journal *Genetics*, indicates that although all state education standards in the U.S. include genetics content, there is still a widespread lack of understanding and several common misconceptions that appear to be prevalent among U.S. high school students.

DNA Day activities are designed to inform students and potentially inspire some to join the next generation of scientists who will use genetic research to further benefit public health, according to the ASHG. For more information about Miami’s DNA Day projects, go to

www.terrificscience.org.