



Amgen Awards Three Golden Tickets for LabCentral Residency

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Innovative Start-Up Companies Receive One-Year Free Lab Space

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., March 28, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Amgen (NASDAQ:AMGN) and LabCentral announced that Cocoon Biotech, Torus Therapeutics, and Holobiome are the winners of Golden Ticket awards. Sponsored by Amgen, the Golden Ticket awards underwrite the cost of a lab bench for a scientist from each organization to reside in LabCentral's open lab for one year. LabCentral is an innovative, shared laboratory space designed as a launchpad for premier high impact life-sciences and biotech startups. Amgen entered into a multi-year platinum-level sponsorship with LabCentral in late 2014.

Amgen awarded a second Golden Ticket to Cocoon to ensure continuity of working within LabCentral for an additional year and thus support further progression of the startup's early development program. Founded in 2013 to bring treatments for arthritis and other debilitating diseases to market, Cocoon's platform technology is a biocompatible silk protein that can be injected into joints to provide effective long-lasting pain relief and potentially delay the progression of disease. The platform is designed to leverage several unique properties of the silk protein fibroin, including strength, lubrication and biocompatibility.

"Cocoon is thrilled to receive a second Golden Ticket from Amgen," said Ailis Tweed-Kent, chief executive officer and founder of Cocoon Biotech. "In addition to providing lab space, Cocoon has networked with Amgen scientific experts who have been instrumental to Cocoon's success. The opportunity to interact with world-class bioscience visionaries is priceless and has without a doubt accelerated our progress. We look forward to continuing this progress as we aim to improve the lives of those suffering from osteoarthritis."

Torus Therapeutics is a seed-stage biotechnology company that is developing transformative gene therapies for severe genetic and rare diseases.

"LabCentral is where we wanted to be: top-notch facilities, surrounded by smart, focused people — puzzling through many of the same science and business challenges that we are," said Mark D. Angelino, chief operating officer of Torus Therapeutics. "Having our first year covered takes enormous pressure off a young company like ours and we are enormously grateful to Amgen to help make it possible."

Holobiome is developing bacteria into therapy for mental health disorders. The company's lead product is a consortium of neurotransmitter-modulating human gut bacteria, with potential applications beyond mental health.

"It's an honor to be awarded Amgen's Golden Ticket," said Philip Strandwitz, Ph.D., chief executive officer and founder of Holobiome. "Having the expansive support of Amgen and access to LabCentral's facilities will help catalyze Holobiome's rapid entrance into the arena of microbiome therapeutics, with an initial focus on mental health disorders."

"We are delighted to award three innovative and forward-looking companies with a Golden Ticket," said Aine Hanly, vice president of Process Development and site head of Amgen Massachusetts. "The winners align with Amgen's strategy to encourage scientific innovation within our research focus areas. We look forward to seeing how these companies will thrive within LabCentral and develop solutions that have the potential to address critical patient health needs."

"It's been enormously gratifying to see the tremendous success and popularity of our Golden Ticket program," said Johannes Fruehauf, M.D., Ph.D., co-founder and president of LabCentral. "Each sponsor has tailored its Golden Ticket sponsorship in its own way to suit its particular company needs. Amgen has really gone all-in – highlighting its support of LabCentral internally and actively encouraging employee participation with us as a key part of its mission of inspiring innovation in next-generation therapeutics."

About Amgen

Amgen is committed to unlocking the potential of biology for patients suffering from serious illnesses by discovering, developing, manufacturing and delivering innovative human therapeutics. This approach begins by using tools like advanced human genetics to unravel the complexities of disease and understand the fundamentals of human biology.

Amgen focuses on areas of high unmet medical need and leverages its expertise to strive for solutions that improve health outcomes and dramatically improve people's lives. A biotechnology pioneer since 1980, Amgen has grown to be one of the world's leading independent biotechnology companies, has reached millions of patients around the world and is developing a pipeline of medicines with breakaway potential.

For more information, visit www.amgen.com and follow us on www.twitter.com/amgen.

About LabCentral (www.labcentral.org; twitter @labcentral)

A 28,000 square-foot facility in the heart of the Kendall Square, Cambridge, biotech innovation hub, LabCentral is a first-of-its-kind shared laboratory space designed as a launchpad for high-potential life-sciences and biotech startups. It offers fully permitted laboratory and office space for early-stage companies comprising approximately 125 scientists and entrepreneurs. LabCentral provides first-class facility and administrative support, skilled laboratory personnel, a domain-relevant expert speaker series – as well as the other critical services and support that startups need to begin laboratory operations on day one. A private, nonprofit institution, LabCentral was funded in part by a \$5 million grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, with support from its real-estate partner, MIT. Founding sponsors include Triumvirate Environmental and Johnson & Johnson Innovation.

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