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LENEXA TEEN AWARDED \$25,000 FOR INVENTING TOOL TO MONITOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Erin Smith to be Named a 2018 Davidson Fellow

Lenexa, Kan. – The Davidson Institute for Talent Development has announced the 2018 Davidson Fellows. Among the honorees is 18-year-old Erin Smith of Lenexa. Smith won a \$25,000 Davidson Fellows Scholarship for her project, *FacePrint: A Diagnostic and Monitoring Tool for Parkinson's Disease Using Dynamic Video Footage Tracking and Digital Action Unit Biomarkers Generated by Spontaneous and Posed Facial Expressions*. She is one of only 20 students across the country to receive this honor.

“Being selected as a Davidson Fellow helps validate the hours of effort and research that have gone from turning this idea into a tangible technology that will transform the way Parkinson’s disease and other neurological diseases are diagnosed and treated,” said Smith. “Further, being a Davidson Fellow will help make it possible for me to attend Stanford, a school that perfectly combines my interests of neuroscience and computer science.”

More than 10 million people worldwide are currently living with Parkinson’s disease, and the number of cases is expected to more than double by the year 2030 due to the aging population. The current diagnostic methods are often subjective, and lack of quantified biomarkers and tools hinders the process. Smith’s FacePrint digitizes and quantifies the masked face and other identified spontaneous and posed facial expression impairments associated with early signs of disease onset. Requiring only a computer and webcam, FacePrint offers an inexpensive, remote tool to detect early stage Parkinson’s disease within milliseconds.

Throughout high school, Smith was a member of the Shawnee Mission School District Biotechnology Signature Program. She is also the co-founder of Kansas City STEMinists, a coding program that teaches middle and high school aged girls how to use computer science and entrepreneurship to create sustainable solutions to global issues. She participated in the International Swiss Talent Forum and has spoken at the Emotion Artificial Intelligence Summit at MIT Media Lab.

Smith will study computer science at Stanford University in the fall and hopes to pursue a M.D.-Ph.D.

“We are thrilled to recognize the 2018 Davidson Fellows not only for their incredible projects, but also for the journey they forged to reach this point,” said Bob Davidson, founder of the Davidson Institute. “Every year I am amazed by the depth of the Fellows’ accomplishments. Through encouragement and recognition, the Davidson Institute for Talent Development anticipates that gifted students like these will be among the pioneers who will solve the world’s most vexing problems.”

The 2018 Davidson Fellows will be honored at a reception in Washington, D.C., on Friday, September 28.

The Davidson Fellows Scholarship program offers \$50,000, \$25,000 and \$10,000 college scholarships to students 18 or younger, who have completed significant projects that have the potential to benefit society in the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, literature and music. The Davidson Fellows Scholarship has provided more than \$7.5 million in scholarship funds to more than 300 students since its inception in 2001, and has been named one of the most prestigious undergraduate scholarships by [U.S. News & World Report](#). It is a program of the Davidson Institute for Talent Development, a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Reno, Nev. that supports profoundly gifted youth.

About the Davidson Institute

Founded by Bob Davidson in 1999, the Davidson Institute for Talent Development recognizes, nurtures and supports profoundly intelligent young people, and provides opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive

difference. The Institute offers support through a number of programs and services, including the Davidson Fellows Scholarship and the [Davidson Academy of Nevada](http://www.DavidsonAcademy.org). For more information about the 2018 Davidson Fellows, please visit www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship.

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High-resolution photos are available at www.DavidsonGifted.org/Fellows-Scholarship.