

## MEDIA AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Cultivating public engagement with science's advances is a critical endeavor. Global challenges require an understanding of science. Our national well-being depends on support for science. Even personal health decisions are made more wisely with an understanding of science's breakthroughs. AAAS amplifies and clarifies messages about the world of science through its top-notch Annual Meeting, online news activities, awards and fellowships for science journalists and research-informed public events.



*AAAS Family Science Days in Washington, D.C., included a series of engaging stage presentations that encouraged audience participation.*

### AAAS ANNUAL MEETING REACHES OUT

With the theme of “Science Without Borders,” the 2011 AAAS Annual Meeting brought together nearly 5,000 researchers, science policy experts and educators, who took part in a wide array of presentations and activities. These ranged from a discussion of the challenges of sustainably feeding the planet’s inhabitants in 2050, when our population is expected to hit 9 billion, to a machine that could “print” new skin, one thin layer at a time, to treat wounds.

More than one thousand U.S. and foreign newsroom registrants also participated in the meeting, providing extensive international news coverage on the latest scientific progress and challenges. At the meeting’s Family Science Days, nearly 2,100 attendees of all ages were treated to various activities, from making bouncing balls using polymers, to a dance performance exploring the evolution of life, to meeting and chatting with scientists about their work.

### SUPPORTING SCIENCE JOURNALISM BROADLY

EurekaAlert!, AAAS’s online news service, supplied breaking news to approximately 1 million unique online visitors each month, for a total of 1.5 million monthly visits. Some 8,600 registered science reporters and editors from 85 countries received a news package via e-mail to alert them each week to the latest breakthroughs from *Science*,

*Science Translational Medicine* and *Science Signaling* as well as hundreds of other sources on EurekAlert! For its part, the online “SciPak,” or *Science* press package, offered access to summaries of forthcoming research, related photos, videos, audio recordings, background information and opportunities to interview researchers.



In 2011, the *Science* public information team added Arabic-language translations of the top four news summaries each week, supplementing existing translations in French, Spanish, Chinese and Japanese. EurekAlert! helped sponsor the World Conference of Science Journalists in Doha, Qatar, where Alan I. Leshner, AAAS CEO and executive publisher of *Science*, served as keynote speaker. EurekAlert! also introduced a cancer research portal, live webcast coverage of the AAAS Annual Meeting, video interviews with researchers for the site’s Science Reporting for Kids portal, and a new system to let news outlets such as the *Washington Post*, *Wired.com* and *Huffington Post* republish *ScienceNOW* content.

The 2011 EurekAlert! Fellowships for International Science Reporters went to four reporters—from Argentina, Chile, China and Egypt—who received stipends to attend the AAAS Annual Meeting.

Meanwhile, the AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Awards singled out stories on the use of genetic analysis to help save a boy with a life-threatening disease, on the potential impact of climate change in two places, and on the secret lives of scientists and engineers, to name a few of the winning topics picked by an independent panel of science journalists. Funded by The Kavli Foundation, the awards go to professional journalists for distinguished reporting for a general audience.

### ENGAGING WITH THE AAAS DIVISIONS

The 2011 AAAS Arctic Division meeting provided an important forum for public debate, drawing more than 75 scientists, policymakers and others from the United States, Canada and Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula as well as 150 residents from Alaska’s Bristol Bay region. The topic? From

a science and engineering standpoint, can a mine proposed to extract billions of tons of copper and gold be developed in the region’s sensitive, earthquake-zoned environment without endangering its world-class wild salmon fishery and the communities that depend on it?

At the 2011 AAAS Pacific Division meeting, Princess Takabuti, an Egyptian mummy who dates back to about 700 B.C., was one of the stars. The meeting was held in conjunction with the 7th World Congress on Mummy Studies and offered sixteen sessions on the science of mummies, from DNA analysis to techniques for developing facial images from mummified remains. The meeting offered a broad range of symposia beyond its focus on mummies, on topics such as tsunamis, Antarctic ice analysis, Fragile X Syndrome and the ways in which music and the sciences intersect.

The AAAS Caribbean Division worked with Haitian, Puerto Rican, Canadian, Rwandan and U.S. scientists, engineers, educators and government leaders to develop a workable roadmap for science development in Haiti. For more information, see page 13.

### ABELSON EVENT ON ALZHEIMER’S RESEARCH

AAAS and the journal *Science Translational Medicine* invited top experts in the field of Alzheimer’s disease to an April 2011 event intended to stimulate new thinking about the condition and help speed medical advances. Researchers spoke to a packed auditorium, offering insights on a disease that is currently predicted to affect 16 million Americans within 50 years. The event was named after the late *Science* editor and AAAS senior adviser Philip Hauge Abelson.



*Alzheimer’s researcher Richard Morimoto of Northwestern University (left) confers with Melvin Simon of The Agouron Institute, which supported the 2011 Philip Hauge Abelson Advancing Science event.*