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Google, Facebook, Apple launch 'Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences'

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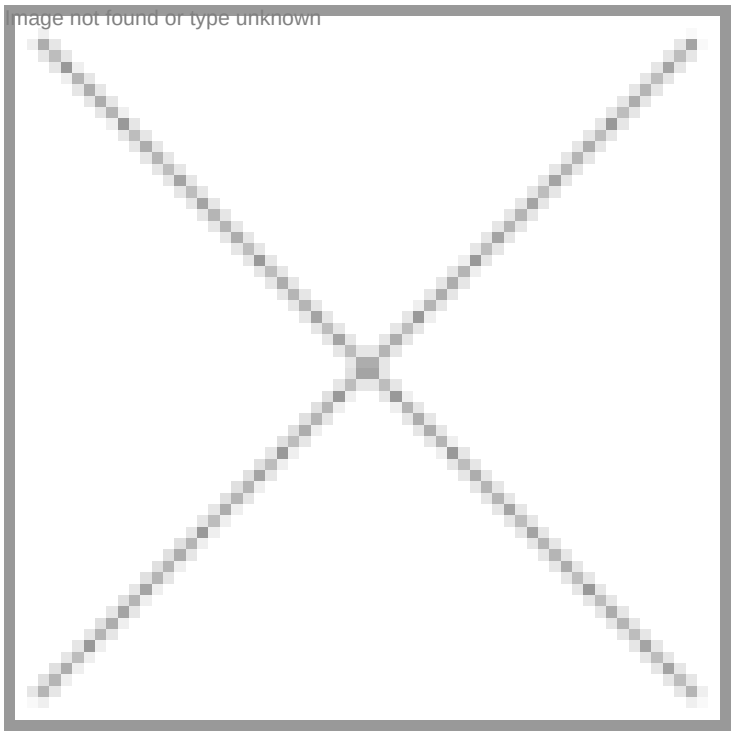

Singapore: Mr Sergey Brin (computer scientist and co-founder of Google), Ms Anne Wojcicki (American biologist, co-founder of 23andMe, and wife of Mr Brin), Mr Mark Zuckerberg (co-founder of Facebook), Ms Priscilla Chan (wife of Mr Zuckerberg), Mr Arthur Levinson (chairman of Genentech and Apple), and Mr Yuri Milner (Russian entrepreneur and venture capitalist) announced the launch of the 'Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences'.

The award recognizes excellence in research that is aimed at curing intractable diseases and extending human life. The prize will be administered by the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences Foundation, a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to advancing breakthrough research, celebrating scientists and generating excitement about the pursuit of science as a career.

The first 11 recipients of the Breakthrough Prize have been decided as Dr Cornelia I Bargmann (for the genetics of neural circuits and behavior, and synaptic guidepost molecules), Dr David Botstein (for linkage mapping of Mendelian disease in humans using DNA polymorphisms), Dr Lewis C Cantley (for the discovery of PI 3-Kinase and its role in cancer metabolism), Dr Hans Clevers (for describing the role of Wnt signaling in tissue stem cells and cancer), Dr Napoleone Ferrara (for discoveries in the mechanisms of angiogenesis that led to therapies for cancer and eye diseases).

The other recipients include, Dr Titia de Lange (for research on telomeres, illuminating how they protect chromosome ends and their role in genome instability in cancer), Dr Eric S Lander (for the discovery of general principles for identifying human disease genes), Dr Charles L Sawyers (for cancer genes and targeted therapy), Mr Bert Vogelstein (for cancer genomics and tumor suppressor genes), Dr Robert A Weinberg (for characterization of human cancer genes), Dr Shinya Yamanaka (Nobel Laureate known for his work on induced pluripotent stem cells). All prize winners have agreed to serve on the Selection

Committee of the Foundation to choose recipients of future prizes.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the prize will be that anyone will be able to nominate a candidate online for consideration. Also, the prize can be shared between any number of deserving scientists and can be received more than once. In addition, there are no age restrictions for nominees. All Breakthrough Prize recipients will be invited to present public talks targeting a general audience. These lectures, together with supporting materials, will be made available to the public, allowing everyone to keep abreast of the latest developments in life sciences, guided by contemporary masters of the field.

Founding sponsors of the Breakthrough Prize include Mr Brin, Ms Wojcicki, Mr Zuckerberg, Ms Chan and Mr Milner, who collectively have agreed to establish five annual prizes of $3 million each. Mr Levinson will serve as the chairman of the board of the foundation, while additional directors will include Ms Wojcicki, Mr Zuckerberg and Mr Milner .

Mr Levinson said that, "I am delighted to announce the launch of the Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences and welcome its first recipients. I believe this new prize will shine a light on the extraordinary achievements of the outstanding minds in the field of life sciences, enhance medical innovation, and ultimately become a platform for recognizing future discoveries. I also want to thank our founding sponsors, Sergey Brin , Anne Wojcicki , Mark Zuckerberg, Priscilla Chan and Yuri Milner. Without their contribution, this prize would not have been possible."

Ms Wojcicki said that, "We are thrilled to support scientists who think big, take risks and have made a significant impact on our lives. These scientists should be household names and heros in society." Mr Brin said that, "Curing a disease should be worth more than a touchdown." Mr Zuckerberg, "Priscilla and I are honored to be part of this. We believe that Breakthrough Prize in Life Sciences has the potential to provide a platform for other models of philanthropy, so people everywhere have an opportunity at a better future." Mr Milner said that, "Solving the enormous complexity of human diseases calls for a much bigger effort compared to fundamental physics and therefore requires multiple sponsors to reward outstanding achievements."