



## **For Immediate Release**

**Contact:** Cathy Powers, NREF

(847) 378-0540

[cmp@aans.org](mailto:cmp@aans.org)

### **Sometimes the requests attached to membership in the AANS can be surprising**

(Rolling Meadows, IL) - U.S.A. Today reached out to staff at the AANS about a program it was running for middle-school students. Seventh and 8th grade students were asked to write an essay about their career aspirations, detailing their thoughts on the professions they hoped to enter into as adults. Part of the prize for winning the essay contest included a day shadowing someone in that dreamt-about profession.

One of the winning essays, submitted by Alahji Barry, a middle schooler from Atlanta, concluded his essay with the following paragraph:

*“My decision to become a neurosurgeon did not come in a moment of blinding revelation, but as a result of an interest in science. Through future experiences I will encounter, I can think of no other profession that is so fulfilling and rewarding as that of a neurosurgeon. The road to becoming a brain surgeon is necessarily a long one. But with the sufficient amount of dedication, and my strong passion to learn, I will be able to achieve my dream. In addition, I will not allow anything to interfere with the attainment of my goal.”*

Alahji’s goal created a slight dilemma for the contest organizers: where could they find a neurosurgeon willing to spend time with a teenager? Enter the AANS and Regis W. Haid Jr., MD, FAANS, who took time out of his busy schedule to meet with Alahji and show him the neurosurgical ropes.

“I really enjoyed meeting with Alahji, hearing about his hopes for his future and sharing some of my professional experiences with him. The founding principles of neurosurgery have always included taking time for the next generation, and, while Alahji is younger than most, his interest, inquisitiveness and intelligence created a day that was as memorable for me as I hope it was for him,” said Dr. Haid. “You don’t often get to spend the afternoon with the future. I highly recommend the experience.”

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### ***About the NREF***

The Neurosurgery Research and Education Foundation (NREF) is a not-for-profit 501 (C)(3) organization created in 1980 by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) to support research and education efforts that enhance and confirm the critical role neurosurgeons play in improving lives.

The NREF is dedicated to providing education to neurosurgeons at all stages of their careers, as well as funding research into new and existing neurosurgical treatments, in order to identify links between best practices and improved outcomes in patient care. Through voluntary public donations, corporate support, and donations from allied groups, the NREF supports endeavors that impact the lives of those suffering from epilepsy, stroke, brain tumors, spinal disorders, sports-related head injuries, lower back pain and Parkinson’s disease.