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MEDIA ADVISORY

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**BASE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT AWARDED GATES MILLENNIUM
SCHOLARSHIP**

***Recent Graduate of Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment Receives
Prestigious Award***

Brooklyn, NY —September 12, 2008—Richaela Primus, a 2008 graduate of Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE) is one of 1,000 students honored with a Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) award. Ms. Primus was selected from a candidate pool of more than 13,000 high school students nationwide from the 9th to the 12th grade. The coveted scholarship is noteworthy because it funds the tuition of each recipient's entire course of higher education, from undergraduate through Ph.D. work.

The GMS program promotes academic excellence and provides an opportunity for outstanding students of color with significant financial need to reach their highest potential. It is also dedicated to increasing the representation of these target groups in the disciplines of education, engineering, library science, mathematics, public health, and the sciences, areas in which these groups have been severely underrepresented.

Ms. Primus, who lives in Brooklyn, New York, graduated from BASE in 2008. She plans to become a doctor of veterinary science and is attending Wells College, in Aurora, New York. A liberal arts school, Wells also offers students the opportunity to take classes at nearby Ithaca College and Cornell University, where Ms. Primus plans to earn her masters degree. In addition to the Gates scholarship, Ms. Primus is the recipient of federal aid, and she will apply for on-campus student employment to defray the cost of living expenses.

Ms. Primus hopes to become a wildlife veterinarian, a profession that will allow her to incorporate her veterinary medical research with the entomology studies and experience she began to accumulate at BASE and will continue at Wells. Ms. Primus foresees doing work in a community organization to raise awareness about environmental conservation.

Part of BASE's second graduating class, Ms. Primus earned top honors throughout her four years at the high school. She was a BASE School Ambassador, mentoring younger classmates as part of a school-wide program. She participated in the Field Studies program as part of the Living Environment Course, in which participating students work with Brooklyn Botanic Garden scientists and Prospect Park naturalists on a challenging "real world" research project. Ms. Primus also participated in BASE's rigorous Science Research program; she developed an original project under the guidance of BASE science teachers Caren Cleckley and Michael Duggan and mentor Elyssa Arnone. She also spent one spring break exploring the Everglades with fellow students on a program developed by BASE's partners, Prospect Park, and Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

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“BASE provided a welcoming environment and was really the first time I experienced the one-on-one interaction with my teachers,” said Ms. Primus. “I really valued being part of a learning team that included all the students, our parents, and the educators,” she explained.

Ms. Primus utilized her summers off from BASE to study abroad, earning grants and scholarships to study termite architecture in St. John’s, in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and at Cambridge University, in England. She also participated in Arthur Ashe Institute’s Health Science Academy at SUNY Downstate, a program that prepares students of color for careers in medicine. This summer Ms. Primus volunteered in Grenada at a local animal clinic, providing care and assisting the veterinarians with surgeries.

According to Veronica Peterson, principal at BASE high school, “Richaela represents the very best of what BASE can provide to our students. We are extremely proud of her contributions to the school and respect the honor she has brought to us and her community.” Peterson added, “She is an accomplished young woman who demonstrates a level of excellence that will raise the bar for future students.”

The Gates scholarship selection process is an extremely rigorous one, dedicated to identifying not only academic excellence but also strong leadership qualities and the skills that students can use to contribute to their community by addressing social problems. The GMS program was established in 1999 and initially funded by a \$1 billion grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and is administered by the United Negro College Fund.

Ms. Primus is excited that this year’s scholarship awardees will meet for the first time in Washington, DC, at an all-expense-paid three-day weekend of networking and leadership workshops. The GMS program plans to make this an annual event so that scholarship winners can continue to network and build community for strong leadership and support in the future.

Brooklyn Academy of Science and the Environment (BASE) High School is a New Century High School, created in collaboration with New Visions for Public Schools, the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers and the Council of School Supervisors & Administrators, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Open Society Institute. BASE benefits from a strong collaboration with Audubon New York. BASE also receives support from Con Edison, the John N. and Gillett A. Gilbert Family Fund, Lehman Brothers Foundation, and the New York City Environmental Fund.

For more information visit: <http://bbg.org/edu/base.html> | <http://www.prospectpark.org/base>