

Dear Mr. Charles Simonyi,

Thank you so much for being my sponsor so that I could participate in the Adventures of the Mind program this summer. I had an amazing time and I can't even begin to describe how this experience will change me forever. Naturally I was excited about meeting all the guest speakers that specialized in my areas of interest, such as Ms. Amy Tan, Ms. Amy Myers, and Dr. Luis von Ahn. But when I got to the conference, what I realized was that there were also so many distinguished people here from other areas I had never even considered studying. Dr. Alison Gopnick and Dr. Erich Jarvis's speeches made me interested in psychology while Dr. Mark Lehner's discussion of the Giza pyramids really captured my interest. Additionally, although I had never been interested in biology before, Dr. Carl Greider's work in studying telomeres and telomerase was really quite fascinating. I also met people who were able to combine their interests to pursue a career they really enjoyed, such as Dr. Larry Gonick.

Hearing the stories and experiences of these people from their early years to their rise to success was really wonderful. I couldn't believe that such successful people such as Ms. Amy Tan had such a rough life, or that Pixar in its early years had to keep itself afloat by building hardware. Nor could I fathom the hardships Ms. Ginny Ruffner had to go through after her car accident, yet still be able to create such beautiful works of art.

My experiences at the Adventures of the Mind program were truly marvelous and impressive. I met so many other students of my age group from all around the country with different backgrounds and talents. We were all able to share experiences, laughs, and knowledge, and I know I'll be keeping in touch with these new friends for probably the rest of my life. Adventures of the Mind opened my eyes to a whole new world where even people who didn't know what they were going to be in 20 years became successful. Meeting my fellow students and the guest speakers made me think about my future and the many passions, old and new, that I want to pursue. So, thank you so very much for sponsoring me on this trip. This experience, the people I've met, and the friends I've made mean the world to me, and I can't thank you enough, Mr. Simonyi.

Sincerely,  
Z. Amanda Chen