

1-8-2003

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03-7

January 8, 2003

For Immediate Release:

KIRKPATRICK AWARDED UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT AT EIU

CHARLESTON – Neil S. Kirkpatrick, a junior biological sciences major at Eastern Illinois University, recently was awarded a \$250 undergraduate research grant.

This grant, awarded by EIU's Undergraduate Research Council through the university's Honors Program, will allow Kirkpatrick to continue research on his project, "Recovery of antibiotic resistant bacteria from local landfill leachate: A Study in Potential Public Health Hazards."

To be eligible for an undergraduate research grant, a student must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher, and be conducting research under the direction of a faculty sponsor. Only six such grants are awarded each fall and spring semester.

Working with James McGaughey, an associate professor in Eastern's Department of Biological Sciences, Kirkpatrick has worked to isolate certain strains of bacteria (e.g., staphylococcus, streptococcus and escherichia coli) and use different antibiotics (e.g., tetracycline, ampicillin and vancomycin) on the cultures to find out whether or not these bacteria are resistant to certain antibiotics. If antibiotic-resistant organisms are found in the leachate, then more research must be done on the surrounding area's groundwater to ensure public health and safety.

Upon completion of the study, the project will be presented at the Spring 2003 annual meeting of the Illinois State Academy of Science, set to take place in Bloomington.

Kirkpatrick, a 2000 graduate of Central A & M High School in Moweaqua, is the son of Shawn and Luann Kirkpatrick of Assumption.