About the Authors

Kayla Castellitto conducted this study as a part of her George H. Cook Honors Thesis research, while she was an undergraduate student at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences. During her senior year at Rutgers, she served as the Vice President of the Rutgers (Omicron Beta Alpha) Chapter of Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) Honor Society and coordinated the other KON student members' assistance in the study. Upon her graduation in Spring 2018, she completed her Dietetic Internship at Rutgers University, School of Health Professions. After completion of more than 1200 hours of supervised practice in the clinical and community settings, she successfully passed the Commission on Dietetic Registration exam and became a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN). Kayla Castellitto is currently a clinical dietitian at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick.

Dr. Nurgul Fitzgerald, PhD, RDN, is an Associate Professor / Extension Specialist at the Department of Nutritional Sciences at Rutgers University. Dr. Fitzgerald served as the faculty advisor to Kayla Castellitto for her G. H. Cook Honors thesis research and to the KON Honor Society students, who were involved in this study. Dr. Fitzgerald's research focuses on cultural, socioeconomic, and environmental effects on food access and intake patterns, and community-based interventions for health promotion and type 2 diabetes prevention especially in low-income or minority populations.

Amanpreet Kaur graduated from the School of Arts and Sciences Honors Program at Rutgers University in January 2020. Having majored in Biological Sciences, she plans on attending medical school. In her junior year, she studied abroad in London, and she remains an avid member of the Rutgers Global community. In her spare time, she enjoys volunteering with elderly and terminally ill patients, travelling, and drawing. In Spring 2018, Amanpreet's interest in the genetics and biology underlying diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's led her to join Dr. Rongo's lab in the Waksman Institute. She subsequently completed her research on the role of eicosanoids in regulating the ubiquitin proteasome system (UPS) for credit.

Anusha Patil is a senior at the School of Arts and Sciences, majoring in Cell Biology and Neuroscience with minors in Psychology and Health & Society. In high school, Anusha volunteered in a Brain Trauma Unit at a local hospital. Here, she interacted with patients who all suffered brain injury yet exhibited varying levels of ability. She was inspired by the resilience these patients demonstrated on their neurorehabilitation journey, and hearing their lived experiences drove her to conduct research in neurotrauma. This research project unites her prior research experiences studying spinal cord injury at the W.M. Keck Center and epigenetics

at CLEF Laboratory. Anusha hopes to pursue a career in medicine, where she can continue to focus on conducting translational research.
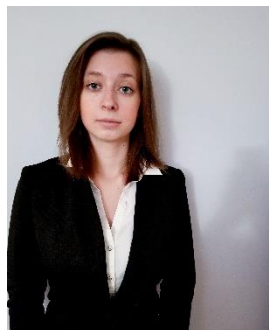
Yelizaveta Rassadkina graduated from Rutgers University with honors in the spring of 2019 with a B.S. in microbiology. This opportunity has inspired her to continue doing research and apply to graduate school to get a Ph.D. in microbiology. While at Rutgers, she did her undergraduate research under her professor, Dr. Barkay, who studies the microbial transformations of metals in the environment. Yelizaveta joined her lab during her junior year and continued to work there until she graduated. During her time she worked on a project with samples from hot springs in Yellowstone National Park. Lots of microorganisms live in harsh environments that contain many toxic metals, such as mercury, and they have developed strategies to overcome the toxicity. Her research project included characterizing the microbial community that was present in such extreme environments and then using that information to identify the ways microorganisms are able to resist mercury thus allowing them to grow where most living organisms would not be able to.

Ryan Rodriguez is a rising junior at Rutgers University, currently pursuing a major in English and a minor in Education. Taking a break from the likes of Milton, Dickens, Cavendish, and Eliot, and after spending two semesters as an intern at the Plangere Writing Center on campus, Ryan has gained substantial interest in measures educators can implement in restructuring pedagogy that offer a more student-driven approach. Originally an assignment given in his internship class, the research he explores soon expanded into a study of how learning environments that stand adjacent to the classroom may provide more desirable spaces conducive to learning than traditional ones, and as a student himself— learning of and understanding the struggles new students face as they transition to the college setting— wanted to present an actualized alternative route to teaching that empowered the party it most affects.

Adriana Scanteianu is a rising fourth year student in the Honors College and a member of the Douglass Residential College studying Mathematics with a minor in Urban Studies. She is a Rutgers Presidential Scholar, a Lloyd C. Gardner Fellow, and a recipient of the Katherine Hazard Prize in Mathematics. Adriana has also been recently accepted into the 3+1+1 program at the Bloustein School, which culminates in a Master of Public Policy. Adriana's research experience began in high school when she conducted and published computational biology research at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai. As a Rutgers student, she traveled to Rwanda under the Western Washington University NSF REU program to study Rwanda's family planning system from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Last summer, Adriana began conducting research in quantum mechanics through the Rutgers DIMACS NSF REU program under Prof. Shadi Tahvildar-Zadeh, alongside Rutgers student Xiangyue Wang. This research continued throughout the academic year and was accepted for presentation at a Contributed Paper Session at the American Mathematical Society Spring Eastern Sectional Meeting. Adriana and Xiangyue have continued to work on their research remotely and will be working with a new Rutgers DIMACS REU cohort this summer.

Prachi Srivastava is a senior in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. She is majoring in Biological Sciences and Psychology with minors in Music and Health & Society. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, volunteering, biking, and musicking.

Prachi's interest in the intersection of neuroscience and psychology led her to join Dr. Benjamin Samuels' behavioral neuroscience lab in her freshman year. During her time with the lab, she has given two poster presentations, been granted the Cooper SURF award, and contributed to two published manuscripts. Her hope is to continue working in neuroscience research with a focus in neurodegenerative diseases.
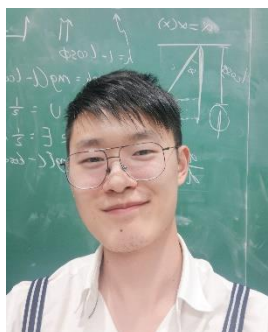
Xiangyue Wang is a rising senior in the Honors Program studying Physics, Mathematics, and Philosophy. He strives to find innovative and equitable solutions to climate change. He is a Rutgers Scarlet Scholar, an Anthony D. Kurtz Scholar, and a recipient of the NJ Chinese Chamber of Commerce Special Recognition Award. Furthermore, he represents more than 30,000 undergraduate students in the Rutgers Senate. Xiangyue's effort to combat climate change began in high school when he was selected by the AT&T Young Science Achievers' Program to research the impact of ocean acidification on phytoplankton. Later, he searched for sustainable and reusable concrete in the NJIT Material Dynamics Lab. At Rutgers, Xiangyue uses physics-based machine learning models to improve wind energy efficiency under Prof. Ahmed Aziz Ezzat. Xiangyue began conducting research in quantum mechanics through the Rutgers DIMACS NSF REU program under Prof. Shadi Tahvildar-Zadeh, alongside Rutgers student Adriana Scanteianu. This research continued throughout the academic year and was accepted for presentation at a Contributed Paper Session at the American Mathematical Society Spring Eastern Sectional Meeting. Xiangyue and Adriana have continued to work on their research remotely and will be working with a new Rutgers DIMACS REU cohort this summer.