

### High school students analyze their DNA

September 7, 2017– The annually organized one-day summer school program for high school students was held at the RIKEN Center for Developmental Biology (CDB) on three separate days, on August 18, 22, and 25. A total of 48 students from high schools around the Kansai area, and from as far as Tokyo and Hiroshima, participated over the three days. This year was the tenth time the program was run, and was the first time that the RIKEN Center for Life Science Technologies (CLST) came on board as a co-organizer of this event. The program offers participating students the chance to carry out experiments, to listen to a talk by a scientist and to take a peek inside a working laboratory.



Students working on experiments



Lecture by Team Leader Takashi Nishimura, and visit to his laboratory

The theme of this year's summer school program was function of genes. Students extracted their own DNA from cells scraped from inside their mouths, and then analyzed whether they carried an active or inactive form of an enzyme important for breaking down alcohol in the body called aldehyde dehydrogenase-2 (ALDH2). Some of the students appeared to struggle in the beginning with trying to get the hang of using micropipettes to mix small amounts of reagents in the small tubes, but by the end of the day, they were carrying out their tasks with ease. During the wait times between experiments, the students listened to a short lecture by Takashi Nishimura, team leader of the Laboratory for Growth Control Signaling, who talked about his current research using *Drosophila* as a model and also shared his story of how he became a scientist and what a career as scientist entails. Following his talk, Nishimura allowed the participants to visit his laboratory to see the latest research equipment, as well as take a look at different *Drosophila* species and mutant lines under the microscope.

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While the program schedule did not allow much time to take breaks throughout the day, the students stayed focused on their tasks and also found time to chat with their lab partners for the day.



Group photos