

## WELCOMING ADDRESS FROM THE MAYOR OF HELSINKI

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Dear Young Scientists,

On behalf of the City of Helsinki I wish you welcome to Helsinki and to the Young Scientist Contest.

Scientific discovery is a strong driving force behind technological progress and the advancement of society. Even though I am not a scientist, I think it is thrilling to learn about scientific discovery and my personal interests lie within astronomy. Its history leads me to think that curiosity must be an important characteristic of all scientists.

Curiosity drives mankind to go beyond the boundaries of existing knowledge and make new discoveries. Occasionally great courage has also been needed when a discovery has challenged prevailing ideas not supposed to be questioned. That was the case of the father of modern astronomy, Galileo Galilei.

Today a scientist coming up with a revolutionary idea will of course not face the same reaction from society as Galileo did. Even so a scientist must show both persistence and determination in order to be successful.

It is important that the curiosity of a young mind is nourished and encouraged. We all know that top athletes and top musicians develop their talent at a young age. The same applies to top scientists. That is why the Young Scientist Contest is so important. Here youngsters can meet other eager young minds and feel that their urge to make discoveries is rewarded. During the contest you are encouraged to challenge each other, learn from each other and most importantly – have fun together and make new friends.

Even if you do not pursue a career as a scientist, basic knowledge in science is important. Our everyday life is filled with new inventions that all rely on scientific discovery and that eventually change the way we live. The world makes also more sense to us when we can understand natural phenomena and do not have to rely on superstition or assumptions.

While in Helsinki I hope you will also have the time and curiosity to explore the city. You will find that Helsinki is a city with a lot to offer. You will not only find busy shopping streets and vivid cultural activities but also tranquil spots near water and the forest. Helsinki is a welcoming city open to innovation and a place where it is easy and very safe to make discoveries.

Jussi Pajunen

Mayor of Helsinki