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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOBEL LAUREATE CRAIG C. MELLO, PHD, NAMED TO ADVISORY COUNCIL OF TARA BEAN FOUNDATION

SHREWSBURY, MA— Nobel Laureate, Craig C. Mello, PhD, has been named to the Advisory Council of the Tara Bean Foundation of Shrewsbury, MA. Dr. Mello, of the University of Massachusetts Medical School, is a Co-Recipient of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his co-discovery of RNA interference (RNAi) – the silencing of genes through double-stranded RNA.

The Tara Bean Foundation secures and allocates funds for medical research and treatment advances, with particular focus on pediatric brain tumors. The foundation was established in honor of Tara Katherine Bean, a fourth grader from Shrewsbury who succumbed to a brain tumor in 2000. The organization's fundraising efforts began prior to its founding in 2005 and have totaled over half a million dollars which has benefited UMass Memorial Children's Medical Center and UMass Medical School in Worcester, MA, as well as Children's Hospital, Boston.

"In the seven years since Tara lost her battle with cancer, tremendous advances have been made in medical research," Dr. Mello explained. "Among these advances is the completion of a detailed inventory of all the genes in the human, known as the human genome sequence. This

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inventory, consisting of roughly three billion letters of genetic code, allows doctors for the first time to understand disease with incredible detail; at the level of precisely which genes are defective, absent or over-expressed.”

Karen Bean, co-founder and president of the Foundation, and Tara’s mother, stated, “We are thrilled to have Dr. Mello join our efforts to advance research and treatment efforts for the number two cancer-killer of children, second only to leukemia. Discoveries such as RNAi give children suffering from brain tumors and other types of cancer a powerful new chance for a cure or improved treatments. Dr. Mello’s dedication to research inspires us and gives hope to millions around the world.”

In addition to international recognition through the Nobel Prize, RNAi has received numerous accolades since its discovery in 1998, including:

- USA Today listed RNAi as #11 in the “Top 25 Scientific Breakthroughs” in 2007.
- RNAi was ranked #13 in The Science Channel’s “100 Greatest Discoveries” of all time.
- Science Magazine chose RNAi as the #1 Breakthrough Discovery of the Year in 2002.
- The journal Science listed RNAi in the top 10 scientific advances in 2003.

"RNAi is a natural mechanism essential for life that exists in all of our cells. With our knowledge of the genome sequence and our rapidly improving understanding of how to trigger the body’s own RNA interference response, doctors for the first time have an opportunity to design therapies that enter the RNAi pathway and directly inhibit the genes that cause disease, including, for example, genes that cause tumor cells to divide out of control. But, in order to produce and test life-saving therapies based on advances like RNAi much more work and funding is needed," Dr. Mello added. “In order to bring this and other cutting edge technology into the clinic UMass is developing an Advanced Therapeutics Institute and we are extremely excited to have the support of the Tara Bean Foundation in this exciting endeavor.

Dr. Mello is a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator and holds his BS in biochemistry from Brown University and a PhD in Cellular and Developmental Biology from Harvard University. Prior to joining the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1994 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. In 1995 he was named a Pew Scholar in the Biomedical Sciences. He was elected to the National Academy of Sciences in 2005. In addition to the Nobel prize Dr. Mello is the recipient of numerous awards shared with his colleague Andrew Fire, PhD, of Stanford University.

About the Tara Bean Foundation

The Tara Bean Foundation is a Massachusetts non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to secure and allocate funds for medical research and treatment advances. The Foundation was established in 2005 in memory of Tara Katherine Bean, a nine-year-old girl from Shrewsbury, MA, who passed away suddenly in February of 2000 at age nine from a newly discovered brain tumor from which she exhibited no symptoms. Since 2003, the Tara Bean Valentine's Gala has been the organization's signature fundraising event and is once again scheduled for February 9, 2008 at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, MA. For more information visit <http://www.TaraBeanFoundation.org> or contact Karen Bean at 508-845-1150. Donations are welcome and are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

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