their choosing. Students have even written grants and received funding for project proposals like Bennett’s Millpond Appreciation Day, which they designed in order to build community environmental awareness. “

HHMI—a nonprofit medical research organization that is the nation’s largest private supporter of science education—is investing $86.4 million to support programs at 50 universities this year. HHMI invited 214 research universities with a proven track record in preparing students for graduate education and careers in research, teaching or medicine to compete for the undergraduate science education awards. The institute received 158 applications. A panel composed of leading scientists and educators, including HHMI professors and an HHMI investigator, reviewed the applications.

Although it’s a proven program, The Science House is primarily dependent on competitive grants to maintain its funding.

To provide a source of permanent funding, an anonymous donor introduced a matching program of up to $250,000 in endowment two years ago. Many alumni and friends took advantage of the match, and established endowments supporting The Science House totaling $500,000.

In a follow-up to this successful challenge, another anonymous donor has designated $125,000 in 1:2 matching funds for new and existing endowments for The Science House. Pledges of $10,000 or more will be matched at 50 percent. For example, a $10,000 pledge would be matched by $5,000, allowing the donor to establish a $15,000 endowment. The combined total of a donor’s personal gift with their corporate matching funds will also be matched by this program.

Smaller contributions are welcome and can support a general endowment fund for The Science House. For more information, see “How to make a gift” on the inside back cover.

Anyone watching poker on television peers into a world of steely nerves, intense strategy … and luck.

Michael Binger conquered that world earlier this year, placing third in the World Series of Poker and winning $4.1 million.

Binger was known to friends and family as a “math whiz” since he was a small child. As a toddler, he counted money from his piggy bank almost every day. Later, he focused on baseball statistics, and was fond of strategy games.

He earned his BS in applied mathematics and both a BS and MS in physics from NC State—all in 1999. In 2006, he received his PhD in physics from Stanford University, where he studied theoretical particle physics at the Department of Energy-funded Stanford Linear Accelerator Center.

Binger developed his fascination for the mathematical strategies required to win at gambling while at NC State. On a trip to Las Vegas with a friend, he became determined to master blackjack. After he figured out the secrets to blackjack, poker became the next challenge.

“I studied poker and read books about it. In early 2002, I tried some high-stakes games and got crushed,” he said. “That inspired me to study the game more seriously.”

After more study, he was better prepared, and his success eventually propelled him into bigger games.

“Two days after my PhD defense, I was in Las Vegas, preparing for the World Poker Series,” he said. Today, he’s playing on the professional poker circuit full-time, traveling around the nation and abroad.

Binger said he plans to keep playing poker, which will provide great financial freedom in continuing his research.

“I plan to do some research projects on my own,” he said. “I have a lot of ideas.”