

Brain Matters Writers



Noreen Adoni

Noreen is a freshman at the University of Illinois majoring in Neuroscience. She joined Brain Matters to investigate how the brain impacts the ways in which we interact with the world around us and stay updated on current research in the field. Noreen is interested in studying neurological diseases, hoping to further analyze and treat them as a physician in the future.



Alexander Byrne

Alexander Byrne, a native of the South Side of Chicago, has long fostered his fascination with science and narrative. Now a student pursuing a degree in Neuroscience, Alexander has focused his scholarly work on the overlap of maternal immune activation, neurodevelopmental disorders, and gut-brain microbiota interactions with the aim of determining how early immune signals influence the development of the brain and long-term behavioral outcomes. In addition to this study, he is deeply engaged in molecular neuroscience investigations into the structural processes of prion protein misfolding and aggregation. After finishing his undergraduate studies, Alexander plans to undertake a Ph.D. in neuroscience. His desire is to be involved in translational research that converts molecular biology into clinical knowledge.



Anika Chandola

Anika Chandola is a Freshman Majoring in MCB with a minor in Psychology and Chemistry on the Pre-Med track. She is currently working in Bagchi Lab researching the environmental impact on reproductive health and volunteered at UChicago's Phlebotomy Clinic. She is also a member of the Gamma Phi Beta Sorority working alongside Girls on the Run. In her freetime she enjoys fashion, swimming, pageants and playing the piano. She hopes to become more involved in the neuroscience field and learn more about this diverse community.



Rayyan Iqbal

Rayyan Iqbal is a sophomore at the University of Illinois, majoring in Chemistry. He is currently conducting research in the Physical Activity and Neurocognitive Health Lab, where he studies the impact of physical behaviors—such as physical activity and sedentary time—on brain health. Beyond his research, Rayyan is actively involved in REACT, an outreach program that brings science to life for young students in the Champaign-Urbana area.



Isha Kandlikar

Isha Kandlikar is a rising junior at the UIUC majoring in Molecular and Cellular Biology with minors in Business and Public Health. She is an undergraduate researcher in the Rudolph Lab, where she studies genetic mouse models to explore treatments for psychiatric disorders. Outside the lab, Isha is a marketing and healthcare consultant, a member of the Illini Medical Screening Society, and involved in Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-health fraternity on campus. Passionate about neuroscience, she is excited to write for Brain Matters and dive deeper into specific topics within the field.



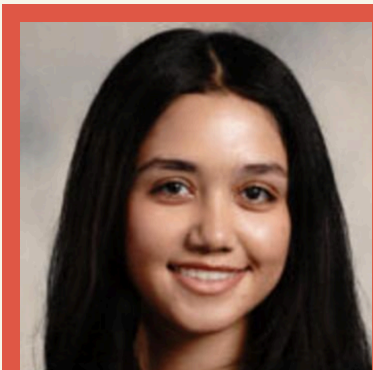
Yuliia Kohut

Yuliia Kohut is a Freshman in Bioengineering on a pre-medical track and a student from Ukraine. Apart from Brain Matters, on campus she is a Global Health executive member in the American Medical Student Association, and she is also a student volunteer at Carle Hospital. Yuliia is an undergraduate researcher in Dr. Best-Popescu lab at Beckman Institute, working on developing imaging tools for cellular neuroscience research. In her free time Yuliia enjoys cross-stitching, cooking Ukrainian food, and reading sci-fi novels. She joined the editing and writing team of Brain Matters to share her fascination with neuroscience with UIUC!



Brianna Mae Huner

Brianna Mae is a Junior at the University of Illinois majoring in Clinical/Community Psychology. She became involved in Brain Matters to gain more experience researching and writing about the current research in Neuroscience. When she is not writing for Brain Matters, she is also involved in Dr. Kwapil's Project on Life Experiences Lab, and is the Treasurer for the Psychology Research and Community Club (PRACC). Brianna Mae is hoping to pursue a PhD in Clinical Neuropsychology and conduct research about the neurological basis behind different clinical disorders.



Emily Aldrich

Emily Aldrich is a Freshman majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Linguistics and Psychology on the pre-med track. Emily joined Brain Matters to gain a deeper understanding of the brain through exploring current research topics in neuroscience. In her free time, she enjoys listening to music, reading, and spending time with friends.



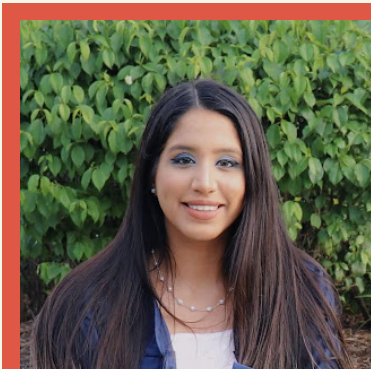
Leah Rupp

Leah Rupp is a freshman at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign studying Molecular and Cellular Biology within the honors concentration. Leah joined Brain Matters to get the opportunity to learn and write about new neuroscience research. Leah is also a Stress Management Peer with McKinley Health Center and a volunteer with the Food Assistance and Well-being Program. In her free time, Leah enjoys running and playing the piano. Her career aspiration is to become a physician.



Ananya Sampathkumar

Ananya Sampathkumar is a sophomore, majoring in Neuroscience with minors in Chemistry and Public Health. Outside of Brain Matters, Ananya is an assistant editor-in-chief for Double Helix Digest, a member of Starcourse, a volunteer at Carle Hospital, and works at the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as a tour guide and student ambassador. In her free time, Ananya likes to read books, make jewelry, watch movies, and hang out with her friends.



Vani Sharma

Vani Sharma is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB) with an honors concentration, alongside a minor in Public Health and a Neuroscience certificate. As a writer for Brain Matters, she investigates the intricate interplay between the brain and diverse phenomena, including the neural foundations of gratitude, the influence of music on cognitive processes, and the complexities of neuroanatomy and neurological disorders. Through her work, she blends rigorous scientific research with engaging narratives to illuminate the brain's extraordinary intricacies while promoting scientific literacy and making complex concepts accessible to a broader audience.



Navi Singh

Navi Singh is a rising Junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, majoring in Neuroscience and minoring in Health Administration and Chemistry on the Pre-Medical track. She is an aspiring physician hoping to specialize in Neurology. She is also involved with several RSO's on campus. These include serving as Social Chair for Udaan and the Undergraduate Neuroscience Society, being a member of a Pre-Health Professional Fraternity Phi Chi, mentor for Illini Mentor Program, volunteer for Global Medical Brigades, and Research Assistant at the Kukekova lab. Navi is excited to share her first article and research with Brain Matters!



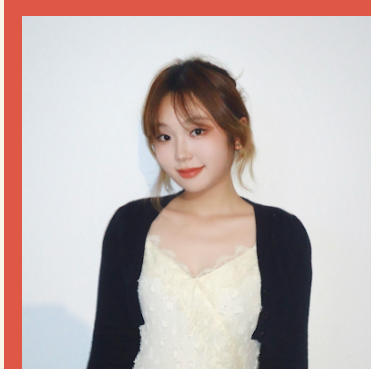
Pravika Srivastava

Pravika Srivastava is a rising junior at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign majoring in neuroscience with a minor in psychology on the pre-medical track. She is passionate about brain health, mental well-being, and hopes to pursue a career in psychiatry. As a writer and new Social Media Co-Chair for Brain Matters, she enjoys writing about neuroscience-related topics while eager in helping expand the journal's outreach. On campus, Pravika volunteers in the Pediatric ICU at Carle Foundation Hospital, conducts research at the CONNECTlab and Rudolph Lab, and serves on the Speaker Committee for Alpha Epsilon Delta. Pravika is excited to share her research and writing as part of her ongoing commitment to advancing understanding of the brain and mental health.



Micah Wang

Micah is a freshman at UIUC majoring in neuroscience. He became involved in Brain Matters to gain experience writing research articles. Outside of academics, you can find him staying active in the ARC by working out or playing volleyball. In the future, Micah hopes to make it to medical school one day.



May Yang

May is a freshman at the University of Illinois majoring in Brain & Cognitive Science. She joined Brain Matters to learn more about the brain, develop her research skills, and connect with people who share similar interests. In addition to writing for Brain Matters, May is also involved in Dr. Hotaling's Cognitive Decision Making Lab. In the future, she hopes to pursue a PhD in a related field.

