

TEACHING

Good Job

Californian children write letters to Brazilian scientists

Lori Connelly is a classroom teacher of a 4th Grade class in a primary school in San Luis Obispo, a town in the interior of California, United States. Surrounded by vineyards, the region is great producer of quality wines and lives under the threat of being hit by Pierce's disease, a pest that attacks the grapevines, caused by a variety of the bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*, which is also responsible for losses in orange trees. In August of 2000, the United States Agricultural Department proposed a partnership to FAPESP for the sequencing of the grapevine *Xylella*, making use of the Brazilian experience in this area. Led by researchers Marie-Anne Van Sluys and Mariana Cabral de Oliveira, both from São Paulo University, and João Paulo Kitajima from the São Paulo

State University of Campinas, the Brazilians met with the North Americans and carried out the work. Teacher Lori, with a *New York Times* story, showed the students, all of them between eight and nine years of age, how it is possible to successfully work in cooperation with people from any place on earth. Twenty nine students then wrote letters thanking the Brazilian scientists. "Lori taught the children that researchers throughout the world are the same and are beyond the differences between rich and poor countries", comments Andrew Simpson of the Ludwig Cancer Research Institute, the coordinator of FAPESP's first genome project, that of *Xylella*. All of the letters have the same tone as that written by Warren Stevens Crendall: "Thank you for the hard work that you have done".



