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LIFE

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McLaughlin researcher earns Ph.D.

By Tribune Staff

Miranda Yeska-Orr, a Montana State University graduate student, successfully defended her thesis on Dec. 20 in Bozeman to earn her Ph.D.

Yeska-Orr spent the past four years in the laboratory of George Carlson at the McLaughlin Research Institute using mouse models to study frontotem-



Yeska-Orr

poral dementia, a disease similar to Alzheimer's.

Yeska-Orr grew up in Saco and became interested in dementia diseases after her grandmother died of Alzheimer's. She got her first taste of Alzheimer's research in Carlson's lab at the McLaughlin Research Institute in 2006.

Yeska-Orr received a National Research Services Award from the National Institutes of Health. This highly competitive fellowship funded her work in Carlson's lab to determine whether stem cell cultures from mouse brain could be accurate disease models for frontotemporal dementia and other dementing diseases including Alzheimer's.

She competed against other graduate students as well as postdoctoral fellows to earn the three-year award that provided funding for her salary, tuition and travel to scientific meetings.

"I'm convinced that Miranda will have a brilliant career in research and make significant contributions towards treating degenerative brain diseases," Carlson said.

Yeska-Orr is the daughter of Jay and Carolyn Yeska of Saco. She currently is looking for postdoctoral research positions in San Antonio to be close to her husband, Tim Orr, who works as a rocket scientist at Southwest Research Institute.