

## San Diego hosts TEDMED 2009

How often have you walked away from an event where you were “educated,” “entertained,” “inspired,” “refreshed,” “amazed” and most of all, connected with the information, the speakers and the other guests at a personal level? At TEDMED 2009, an all-star ensemble of individuals shared compelling stories of the human body, mind and spirit as they relate to healthcare and medicine.

After a several year hiatus, TEDMED ([www.tedmed.com](http://www.tedmed.com)) recently reconvened at the Hotel del Coronado to a sold-out gathering of scientists, technologists, business leaders, entertainers, physicians and patients to exchange their thoughts about the future of health care. All visionaries and futurists in their own right, about 450 thought-leaders from different factions of this discussion spent four days sharing information about the potentials of technology, entertainment and desire to bring health and wellness to individuals. As stated by one attendee, TEDMED provided the framework for very important people to change their perspective of what can happen for patients, and more universally, people and populations.

Shortly after BIO2008, the organizers of TEDMED, Marc Hodosh and Richard Wurman, met with key San Diego industry and community representatives to discuss the opportunity to hold the conference in San Diego. Through the efforts of organizations such as CONNECT, Qualcomm Inc., Johnson & Johnson, and Life Technologies Corporation, San Diego convinced TEDMED to hold its annual meeting here above other city suitors. The result is an annual event that San Diego can lay claim as its own.

TEDMED's goal is to understand how the fusion of Technology, Entertainment and Design shape our world and perception of healthcare and medicine. TEDMED brings together key stakeholders with different perspectives to share, as you would at a dinner party, their experiences, insights and endeavors. But the tone of the conference is not to rely on the speakers but challenge the entire gathering to innovate solutions to healthcare issues through the exchange of information, contacts, and excitement.

San Diego was well represented with presentations by the heads of Synthetic Genomics, Qualcomm Inc., Life Technologies Corporation, Proteus, and Neurovigil. Paul Jacobs, CEO of Qualcomm Inc. and Greg Lucier, CEO of Life Technologies Corporation, shared their unique individual perspectives and their respective company's visions and drive to overcome the challenges of global healthcare by personalizing technology to the individual. Other key presenters included:

- Dean Kamen meeting the first soldier to use the DEKA arm and now capable of sipping from a spoon without spilling a drop, or
- David Blaine, the famed magician, asking the audience to hold their breath while he tells his story of overcoming physical and mental limitations to achieve the 17 minutes, four seconds record for holding breath underwater, or
- Laura Ziskin, a Hollywood producer and cancer survivor, explain the need for greater research in cancer, and how she was able to raise \$100 million to enable cutting-edge research targeting all types of cancer.

The speakers and attendees are an eclectic group of the who's-who across several industries. This list includes individuals such as:

- Craig Venter,
- Deepak Chopra,
- Martha Stewart,
- Paul Jacobs,
- Dean Kamen,
- David Blaine,
- Herbie Hancock,
- Ezekiel Emanuel,
- Steve Wozniak,
- John Abele,
- Eric Topol and
- Greg Lucier.

Each and every attendee brings something to the discussion of healthcare, which makes every attendee relevant. There are no egos at this meeting. TEDMED is organized to maximize interaction between the attendees. It is not uncommon to sit down with more than one billionaire or Nobel Laureate at the table, but it is more exciting to hear what brings Jeremy Bloom (ex-NFL player and Olympian Freestyle) and Jesse Dylan (Freeform) to the meeting. You may find yourself sitting next to the founder of YouTube.

With the high standard of the conference comes a high price tag, \$4000 per ticket. Is it worth the price of admission? Beware, once you attend, you will count the number of days until the next TEDMED. Is it justifiable? You can see the entire conference online for free in a few months (not now) on YouTube as well as the TEDMED website ([www.tedmed.com](http://www.tedmed.com)). But you won't get the experience. Most of the attendees and speakers stayed for the entire conference. How many conferences do you attend where the front row fills up first and the empty seats appear only after the event is over?

Unlike its counterpart TED, registration at TEDMED remains open until they sell out (TED is invite only). It's tentatively slated to be in San Diego at the Hotel Del Coronado as an annual event, with the next event October 26 – 29TH, 2010. The conference is a great coup for San Diego and a reflection of our region's strong innovation economy.