

## Techpoint honors Indiana companies, educators

*Judge narrows 80 nominees to 13 Mira winners*

By Peter Schnitzler

This year's recipients of Techpoint's Mira awards include some of the area's best-known technology startups as well as lower-profile firms that have racked up big achievements.

On May 18, the technology trade group was scheduled to acknowledge the accomplishments of Hoosier entrepreneurs in information technology, life sciences, advanced manufacturing and education with its eighth annual gala at the Indiana Roof Ballroom downtown.

"It's always good to recognize companies and give them a pat on the back, put them on the radar screen," Techpoint President Jim Jay said.

About 800 entrepreneurs, research scientists and legislators were expected to attend. After narrowing a field of more than 80 nominees, Techpoint selected 13 companies and educators to receive Miras.

Techpoint's 22 judges pored through applications and, for the first time, required finalists to make in-person presentations and answer questions.

"[We wanted to] look at the Indiana impact," said Mike Fitzgerald, principal with the Fishers-based technology consultancy Fitzgerald Associates, who helped lead judges through the applications. "Is this a company that was able to establish leadership in their industry and reflect well on the Indiana economy? Are they creating jobs and growing their presence in the community?"

"The other one, and probably the most difficult ... was asking the judges, if they were investors, which would they invest in?"

Winners included high-profile firms like the Indianapolis-based e-mail software developer ExactTarget, Carmel-based Internet search engine ChaCha and West Lafayette-based medical-device maker Quad-

### 2007 Mira Winners

*Techpoint recognized some of Indiana's most innovative companies and individuals at its annual Mira Awards banquet May 18.*

**Advanced manufacturing company:** AccuTemp Products Inc., Fort Wayne

**Advanced manufacturing gazelle company:** ICx Griffin Analytical, West Lafayette

**Distribution, transportation and logistics company:** TransWorks, Fort Wayne

**Distribution transportation and logistics gazelle company:** Sentry Logistic Solutions Inc., Indianapolis

**Education contribution to technology, team/department/program:** Electronic Field Trip Program, Ball State University, Muncie

**Education contribution to technology, individual:** David Berque, DePauw University, Greencastle

**Education contribution to technology, K-12 education:** Stephen Joseph, Terre Haute South Vigo High School

**Health and life sciences company:** AIT Laboratories, Indianapolis

**Health and life sciences gazelle company:** Quadraspec Inc., West Lafayette

**Information technology company:** ExactTarget Inc., Indianapolis

**Information technology gazelle company:** ChaCha, Carmel

**Innovation of the year:** Polymer Technology Systems Inc., Indianapolis

spec Inc. Other winners have made big breakthroughs outside the spotlight.

Techpoint awarded its Mira for innovation of the year, for example, to Indianapolis-based Polymer Technology Systems Inc.

Founded in 1992, the firm spent a decade developing a device that tests blood samples for cholesterol levels in less than 60 seconds. It can also register the difference between high-density lipoprotein, the "good" cholesterol, and low-density lipoprotein, the "bad" cholesterol.

In recent years, the firm has focused on securing regulatory approvals and introducing its CardioChek system to the market. The device sells for about \$120; its disposable testing strips fetch \$12.50 in three-packs.

Last year, PTS hit the jackpot when Wal-Mart agreed to put CardioChek on its store shelves across the country. That led to a rollout in CVS, Meijer and Target stores. The fast-growing firm has reached 105 employees.

Polymer Technology CEO Bob Huffstodt said PTS raised \$30 million over its history, all from local angel investors.

Techpoint's Mira award for higher education went to Ball State University's electronic field trip program. The program—which has relationships with institutions like the National Parks Service and the Smithsonian—sends teams of 10 to 12 people equipped with arsenals of high-tech audio/visual equipment to record virtual field trips for use in classrooms across the country.

"So if you're a child in Indiana, and you may not get out to the Redwood Forest National Park [in northern California], you can participate via this electronic field trip," Fitzgerald said. "That's a very cool thing they're doing."

Fitzgerald said none of the Techpoint judges—all of whom are well-connected entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and economic development officials—was familiar with the program before reading its application.

Indiana's high-tech sector is growing so fast that even its leaders can't keep up.

"Even those who try to pay really close attention to technology, we don't [always] know what's happening," he said. "We were just amazed at this technology in our own backyard."