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Local Teams Head to 'Odyssey of the Mind' World Finals

Submitted by Joni Binder Shwartz



Glorietta Elementary School Odyssey of the Mind coaches Kent Grelling and Chow Chen stand behind fourth grade teammates Eli O'Brien, Maia Shwartz, Christian Schillinger, Andrew Chow, Dylan Wallerstein, and Jordan Grelling Photo provided

After winning regional and state Odyssey of the Mind competitions, local students will head to the world finals at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa on May 27 to compete against teams from across the country.

Three Orinda teams from Glorietta Elementary, Orinda Intermediate School, and Miramonte High School as well as one team from Lafayette's Happy Valley Elementary School qualified for the World Finals.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that "provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and world level."

Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

The Glorietta team chose to engineer a structure made from just eight grams of balsa wood that was able to withstand "shockwaves" of weights being dropped onto it. The structure held 280 pounds before it collapsed.

The OIS and Miramonte teams both competed in the "Superstition" Problem where students created and presented a performance that included two documented superstitions, an original superstition created by the team, and the events that caused the original superstition to come to be.

In order to qualify for the World Finals, teams had to place first or second in the state. Competitive teams are judged on their solution to questions that are standardized internationally as well as their inventiveness in presentation, style, execution, and originality.

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