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The Vocal Chords of Victory

By Steven Zhou



The Miramonte State Championship Tournament team waiting at the awards ceremony. Photo Guita Bahramipour

having fun, is to have succeeded."

Although it was necessary to focus on the challenges, between competition rounds, the students enjoyed the warm Southern California weather, socializing in the food courts, and cheering on the opposition. The finale of the three days culminated with a costume dinner dance. The Miramonte team chose "beach bums" as their theme, rocking the night away in Hawaiian gear, swimsuits, and sunglasses.

The event was a bonding experience for the group. Lisa Chang, a state qualifier for the past three years, remarked, "We've always been a family, but I think our team got even closer this year. Whether someone did well or badly, everyone felt that person's joy or pain and empathized. The camaraderie makes our team stand out. We always carry so much energy and excitement that other teams notice us."

Steven Zhou is a junior at Miramonte High School.

San Diego State University was the location for the annual California High School Speech Association's State Championship over the weekend of April 15th-17th. For three straight days, more than a thousand teenagers from hundreds of high schools around California, debaters, interpretive actors, congressmen and women, orators, and speakers worked skillfully from dawn until dusk, competing for the title of "State Champion."

These participants, having won local State Qualifying Tournaments, are touted as "the best of the best" with Orinda's Miramonte High School boasting twenty-four qualifiers. Parent volunteers and the team's dedicated teacher and coach, Kristen Plant, share in the students' success; fourteen Miramonte candidates made it to the semi-finals, and six advanced to the final competition.

Top scorers included Cecily Schmidt who won 3rd place in Thematic Interpretation, Conor Bean with a 3rd place in Student Congress, and Ross Andrews who garnered 4th place in Original Advocacy.

Plant proudly exclaimed, "In addition to public speaking skills, students learn to be graceful in victory or defeat, to represent Miramonte with pride, and to enjoy pushing themselves to achieve at the highest level of their craft - to accomplish those feats, while



Kristen Plant, teacher and coach of the Miramonte team. Photo Nora Conklin

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