

Independent, locally owned and operated!

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published April 10th, 2024

Moraga Elementary School Odyssey of the Mind Team qualifies for world tournament

Submitted by Liz Coyle



From left: Connor Sakai, Willie Coyle, Niko Smith, Sean Baitx, Everett Fieser, Kira Fey, Jake Barar Photo Michelle Barar Photo provided

or non-team members.

A team of third and fourth graders from Camino Pablo, Los Perales, and Rheem Elementary Schools in Moraga qualified for the world finals for their creative solution to a vehicle-based problem in the STEAM program, Odyssey of the Mind (OM).

The team, which includes members Connor Sakai, Everett Fieser, Jake Barar, Kira Fey, Niko Smith, Sean Baitx and Willie Coyle, and coaches Michelle Barar and Nicole Smith, surpassed approximately 20 other teams from Northern California, over the course of two competitions, to secure their invitation to the world finals.

OM is a creative problem-solving program where teams present their solution to a predefined long-term problem. The solution takes many months to complete, and involves writing, design, construction, and theatrical performance. OM emphasizes a completely participant-driven process, without "outside" assistance from adults

"I like the teamwork and problem solving. We build really unique props, costumes, a vehicle and a play," explained Jake Barar. "I especially like making the costumes and performing in our skit," echoed veteran team member, Sean Baitx.

The Moraga Elementary School team created a vehicle that was powered by three different sources, and performed numerous functions in the context of a skit about an underwater drive-in movie. The skit included original costumes, special effects, music, and a backdrop made from recycled and repurposed materials.

"I'm happy to make new friends through OM, like Kira, who really helped our team this year," said Willie Coyle, who has been part of the team for three years. "I'm proud of our teamwork and how everyone worked together so well on our solution," added Niko Smith.

A huge congratulations to the team, and much gratitude to the coaches, the schools for the use of space, and the team's sponsor, the Moraga Rotary Club.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

<u>back</u>

Copyright C Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA