

Odyssey teams place at world's

Three Odyssey of the Mind teams from Trumbull traveled to Maryland to represent the state in the 2008 Odyssey of the Mind World Finals. More than 800 teams from the United States and around the world competed at this year's World Finals, held May 31 to June 3 at the University of Maryland.

For the third year in a row, Trumbull Odyssey of the Mind Teams advanced to the finals after winning their divisions in the Connecticut tournament. Only the top two teams in each division for each problem are invited to the World Finals.

Booth Hill's technical team placed 7th in the World Finals for the DinoStories problem. The team of fifth-grade students included Avery Collins, Matthew Freed, Megan Kelly, Madison Kustom, Rory Morrison, Josh Pavel and Michael Zabin.

Hillcrest's classics Team placed 11th in the Wonderful Muses problem. Magdalena Abrego, Jenna Bellofiore, Ellie Grossman, Rebecca Kaiserman and Alyssa Zabin made up this team of eighth-graders.

This was the third consecutive year at the World Finals for Hillcrest's Performance Team, which placed 21st in the Eccentrics problem. The team of 6th, 7th and 8th-graders is comprised of Tyler Bieling, Ellen Carpenter, Anurag Chinpalli, Jeremy Eckl, Brooke Hayden, Brent Kaiserman and Owen Osborne.

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Odyssey of the Mind is an international problem-solving competition for students of all ages. The program is designed to stimulate and promote children's natural creativity. Participants are encouraged to seek creative and varied solutions to problems.

"These kids are amazing" said Debbie Zabin, coach of two teams from Booth Hill and Hillcrest. "They have such inventive minds and have learned to work together as a team to solve challenging problems in highly creative ways."

The Odyssey of the Mind program consists of two parts; long term and spontaneous problem solving. Each team selects one of five long term problems and works from October through March to create a solution. Team members must solve all aspects of the problem entirely on their own, without any outside assistance from coaches or parents.

The role of the coach is to help the team develop problem-solving strategies and skills and to expose the team to methods, techniques and materials. During the competition, the team pres-

ents its solution to the long-term problem. The solution is evaluated according to specific problem criteria and following the presentation, the judges question the team members about their solution.

The second part of the competition evaluates the team's spontaneous problem-solving skills. Throughout the year the team practices solving various types of short-term problems that require either an individual verbal response, a coordinated group response, the building of a structure or the accomplishment of a task. At the competition, the team enters the room alone and is asked by the judges to solve one of these types of problems within a specific time frame.

The team's score on their long-term solution is combined with its spontaneous score to determine the final score.

"They had such a wonderful experience at World's" said Nancy Eckl, long-time Odyssey coach. "The kids are already looking forward to solving next year's problems."

For more information about Odyssey of the Mind, contact Debbie Zabin at 380-2089 or go to odysseyofthemind.org.



The Classics Team from Hillcrest Middle School, from left, Alyssa Zabin, Rebecca Kaiserman, Ellie Grossman, Magdalena Abrego and Jenna Bellofiore. The all-girls team placed 11th at the World Finals at the University of Maryland. (Submitted photo)