

Mock trial team makes its case at state level

Hillcrest Middle School's Mock Trial "Red" Team recently joined 12 other regional winners in West Hartford to present their cases in the quarterfinals round of the statewide Middle School Mock Trial Competition, co-sponsored by the Connecticut Consortium for Law and Citizenship Education and the Connecticut Bar Association.

Needing to win both of its rounds to advance to the semi-finals round, Hillcrest was defeated by defending state champion Our Lady of Mercy (Madison) before winning its second match-up. Team members could take consolation that Our Lady of Mercy went on to win the state crown again, defeating other semi-finalist teams from King Philip (West Hartford), St. Ann (Bridgeport), St. Rose

(Newtown), and Weston middle schools.

Working with the guidance of adviser Brian Hendrickson, the "Red" team members, all eighth-graders, are pictured below. From left to right, front row: Chitra Nidadavolu, Camilla Edwards and Emily McGrath; Second row: Patrick Heeks, Kathy Nickson and Jack Zhang. The team's bailiff, seventh-grader Jonathan Graham, is not pictured.

Hillcrest's "White" Team also competed in the regional competition a month earlier, but did not advance with its "Red" counterpart to the quarterfinals. Its members were Miles Buroker, Lance Bragg, Justin Lynch, Avery Collins, Madison Newcomer, Kristy Nickson, Emma Thornton, Daniel Yankura, Kayla Scinto, Simon Du, Dylan McEniry

and Paul Edwards.

Drawing from the high school program's 27-year history, the Middle School Mock Trial Program saw 300 students from more than 30 middle school teams compete in its seventh year. The students presented arguments relating to the case of State of New Jersey v. Jessie Chandler that involves a robbery of an herbal-remedy health and smoothie shop allegedly by employee Jessie Chandler, who's on trial for aggravated robbery.

More information about Hillcrest's Mock Trial teams is available at trumbullace.org, the Web site of the Trumbull ACE Foundation, which sponsored the team's participation in the competition. For more information on the Mock Trial programs, go to cclce.org.