



MONTGOMERY BLAIR HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET FOUNDATION INC.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2015

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Sixteen Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Named Semifinalists in U.S. Physics Team Competition

Silver Spring, MD—Sixteen students from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program were named as semifinalists for the 2015 U.S. Physics Team on February 23 by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics. These students (with each one's grade level) are Adam Busis (12), Theodore Corrales (12), and Jared Marx-Kuo (12) of Silver Spring; Sambuddha Chattopadhyay (10) of Olney; Matthew Das Sarma (12), Eshan Tewari (10), and Catherine Xue (12) of Potomac; Jeremy Du (11), Cynthia Liu (11), Eric Lu (11), Eric Neyman (12), Bendeguz Offertaler (12), Michael Winer (12), and Victor Xu (12) of Rockville; and Raymond Lin (11) and Dennis Zhao (12) of Gaithersburg. Last year, Busis, Das Sarma, Offertaler, Winer, and Xu were all honored as semifinalists, and Winer went on to earn a silver medal as one of five members of the U.S. Physics Team traveling team. This is the fourth consecutive year that at least thirteen Blair Magnet students have been selected as semifinalists for this prestigious team.

In January more than 4,000 high school students nationwide took a written physics test called the F=ma exam. Based on their scores, approximately 400 were named as semifinalists for the U.S. Physics Team. During the week of March 16-22, they will take the U.S.A. Physics Olympiad (USAPhO) exam; and based on these scores, the twenty members of the team will be announced in April. After further testing in Maryland during May 18-27, five of these twenty students and an alternate will be named as members of the 2015 U.S. Physics Team traveling team, qualifying them to represent the United States at the 46th International Physics Olympiad to be held in Mumbai, India on July 5-12.

Of the more than 170 high schools nationally with semifinalists this year, only two had more semifinalists than the Blair Magnet. In fact, Montgomery Blair was the only high school outside of California to have such a large number of semifinalists. Students from the Blair Magnet regularly earn spots on the U.S. Physics

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Team and even the traveling team, providing them the opportunity to earn medals in international competition. At the International Physics Olympiad in 2008, Edward Gan was awarded a gold medal, and in 2010, 2011, and 2013, Anand Oza, Andrew Das Sarma, and Samuel Zbarsky, respectively, each brought home a silver medal. Last year Alexander Bourzutschky and Michael Winer each earned a silver medal. Blair Magnet physics teacher Mr. James Schafer serves as coach of the Blair physics team.

Coach Schafer graciously commends the students, “The number of students qualifying for the next level of competition was outstanding this year. The success is due to the dedication of all the students, but in particular the student leaders of the physics team who have all devoted an incredible amount of time and effort to help all members of the club in preparation for this test. It is great to see so much enthusiasm from the students towards physics.”

Semifinalist and Blair physics team co-captain Jared Marx-Kuo expresses his excitement, “Though personally it’s exciting to finally make USAPhO after trying for three years, I am prouder of the team as a whole. This year, we have 16 members of our physics team make USAPhO, which is the most we have ever had in team history.”



Blair Magnet Senior Jared Marx-Kuo was named as a semifinalist for the 2015 U.S. Physics Team. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Keren Kuo)

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Fellow semifinalist Catherine Xue extends her thanks to Coach Schafer, “Mr. Schafer’s thorough MathPhys course curriculum really helped me perform well on the $F=ma$ exam. I’m glad I had the opportunity to apply everything I learned in his class.”



Blair Magnet Senior Catherine Xue was also named as a semifinalist for the 2015 U.S. Physics Team. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Merry Zhong)

About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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