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Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Senior Named as Intel Finalist; Five Chosen as Intel Semifinalists

Silver Spring, MD—On January 23, Samuel Zbarsky of Rockville, a senior in the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, was named as one of 40 national finalists in the 2013 Intel Science Talent Search by the Society for Science and the Public, the nonprofit organization that administers this competition. Zbarsky’s research is entitled “On Improved Bounds for Bounded Degree Spanning Trees for Points in Arbitrary Dimension” and was completed under the guidance of Dr. Samir Khuller of the University of Maryland College Park, Department of Computer Science. The finalists will compete for \$630,000 in awards from the Intel Foundation, including a top award of a \$100,000 scholarship. Final judging will occur in Washington, D.C. on March 7-13.

Earlier this month, Intel Science Talent Search announced that five Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program seniors, including Zbarsky, were among 300 semifinalists in the 2013 competition. The four other students (and their project titles) include Richard Chen (“Ultrastructural Variations in Glycogen Synthesis”) and Diwakaran Ilangovan (“The Perception of Vertical Visual Perturbation While Walking”) of Gaithersburg; Sharon Chen (“Analysis and Development of Algorithms for the Densest k-Subgraph Problem”) of Potomac; and Jinjie Skarda (“Analysis of Jovian Decametric Emission Using the Long Wavelength Array Station 1”) of Kensington. Each semifinalist will receive \$1,000, and Montgomery Blair High School will receive \$5,000 (\$1,000 for each of the semifinalists) to be used to further science, math, and engineering education.

The Intel Science Talent Search is the oldest and most prestigious pre-college science competition in this country. 1,712 high school seniors, from 467 schools in 42 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, and two overseas locations submitted their original science projects in the fall, and 300 were named as semifinalists. In the Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Program, this work represents the student’s senior research project, overseen by magnet teachers Ms. Angelique Bosse and Ms. Elizabeth Duval. This is

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original research completed under the guidance of a mentor, typically at a leading research institution or university. The work usually begins in the student's junior year and continues throughout the summer. This year only six high schools nationwide (a good number of which are large all-magnet schools) had more Intel semifinalists than the Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Program.

Intel finalist Samuel Zbarsky expresses gratitude to his mentor, "Much of the credit lies with Dr. Khuller. He is good at picking interesting problems that high school students can make progress on." In fact, Zbarsky is the fourth Intel finalist, all from the Blair magnet, whom Dr. Khuller has mentored.



Samuel Zbarsky, Montgomery Blair magnet senior, is one of 40 Intel Science Talent Search 2013 national finalists.

Jinhie Skarda graciously comments on her Intel semifinalist recognition and acknowledges the Blair Magnet, "I am honored to have received this distinction and am grateful to the Blair Magnet program for encouraging me to complete a research internship, write a report, and enter it in competitions. It was very exciting to analyze some of the first data ever taken with a newly completed radio telescope, and I'm pleased with the contributions I was able to make to the project."

Fellow magnet classmate and Intel semifinalist Diwakaran Ilangovan adds, "I'm really glad that I joined the Blair magnet program—it was helpful from start to finish, from Mrs. Duval

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helping me pick out an awesome mentor to Mrs. Bosse and Mr. Schafer reviewing my paper during their free time. Without their help, I doubt that I would have had this research opportunity and been able to use such cool equipment, something which I can definitely see myself doing in the future.”



Montgomery Blair magnet seniors, Jinhie Skarda (above) and Diwakaran Ilangovan (below), and three of their magnet classmates were named Intel Science Talent Search 2013 semifinalists.

In October, Skarda and Samuel Zbarsky were also named as semifinalists in the 2012-13 Siemens Competition in Math, Science, and Technology.

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.

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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