



# Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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**CONTACT:** Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

Address:

MBHS Magnet  
Foundation Inc.  
P.O. Box 101  
Kensington, MD  
20895

### **Two Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Named as Two of Five Members of the U.S. Physics Traveling Team**

**Silver Spring, MD**—Alexander Bourzutschky of Potomac and Michael Winer of North Bethesda, a 2014 graduate of and a rising senior in the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, respectively, were named as two of five members of the 2014 U.S. Physics Traveling Team on June 6 by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics. The mission of the U.S. Physics Team Program is to promote and demonstrate academic excellence through preparation for and participation in the 45<sup>th</sup> International Physics Olympiad, which will be held this year in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 13-21. At this competition, over 400 students from 92 countries will test their knowledge of physics.

In January, 4,274 high school students nationwide took a written physics test called the F=ma exam. Based on their scores, 431 were named as semifinalists for the U.S. Physics Team. Thirteen of these students hailed from the Blair Magnet, including Bourzutschky and Winer. In March a semifinal exam was administered, and based on these scores, nineteen members of the team were selected.

From May 27 until June 6, these nineteen students participated in an extensive training camp, including a crash course in the first two years of university physics, at the University of Maryland's College Park campus. In addition, leading physicists shared their cutting-edge research with the participants. At the end of the training camp, five students were selected to travel to Kazakhstan for the international competition, including Bourzutschky and Winer. Last year, Winer earned a spot on the U.S. Physics Team, along with then Blair Magnet senior Samuel Zbarsky, and Bourzutschky was named as a semifinalist. Blair Magnet physics teacher Mr. James Schafer serves as coach of the Blair Physics Team.

Bourzutschky reflects on his selection to the U.S. Physics Traveling Team, "Being chosen for the traveling team is the

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ultimate culmination of my time in the Blair Magnet, with the Blair Physics Team, and with Mr. Schafer. The training camp coached by Paul Stanley, Dave Fallest, Andrew Lin, JiaJia Dong, and Lucy Chen was very intense and lots of fun; before they selected me, I felt I had little hopes of making the team due to the strong competition I faced. Now I look forward to representing the United States in Kazakhstan next month.”

Blair Physics Team Coach, Mr. Schafer, congratulates Bourzutschky and Winer, “I am extremely excited for both young men. Their selection to the traveling team is a testament to both their passion for physics and their dedication to the material. They worked hard all year both in and out of class learning an incredible amount of material and working to help others to learn, as well. This is a tremendous, and well deserved, honor for both of them.”

Students from the Blair Magnet regularly earn spots on the U.S. Physics 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.



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Blair Magnet 2014 graduate Alexander Bourzutschky (previous page) and rising senior Michael Winer (above) were named as members of the U.S. Physics Traveling Team and will represent the country at the 2014 International Physics Olympiad to be held at Astana, Kazakhstan on July 13-21. (Photos courtesy of Alex Bourzutschky and Ms. Emily Hofmann, respectively.)

### **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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