



# Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Thirteen Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Named Semifinalists in U.S. Physics Team Competition**

**Silver Spring, MD**— Thirteen students from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program were named as semifinalists for the 2013 U.S. Physics Team on February 22 by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics. These students (with each one's grade level) are Alexander Bourzutschky (11) of Potomac; Saurav Das (11), Diwakaran Ilangovan (12), Bob Ma (12), and Dennis Zhao (10) of Gaithersburg; Jason Hyun (12) of Silver Spring; Thomas Loomis (12) of Chevy Chase; Eric Lu (9), Jessica Shi (11), Michael Winer (10), and Samuel Zbarsky (12) of Rockville; Charles Pasternak (12) of Bethesda; and Matthew Yu (9). Last year thirteen Blair Magnet students were selected as semifinalists for this prestigious team, as well.

In January 4,435 high school students nationwide took a written physics test called the F=ma exam. Based on their scores, 406 were named as semifinalists for the U.S. Physics Team. In March a semifinal exam will be administered, and based on these scores, the twenty members of the team will be announced in April. After further testing at the end of May, five of these twenty students and an alternate will be named as members of the 2013 U.S. Physics Team traveling team, qualifying them to represent the United States at the 44th International Physics Olympiad to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark July 7-15.

Of the more than 160 high schools nationally with semifinalists this year, only two had more semifinalists than the Blair Magnet. 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, in 2010 Anand Oza brought home a silver medal, and in 2011 Andrew Das Sarma won a silver medal. Blair Magnet physics and mathematics teacher James Schafer serves as coach of the Blair physics team.

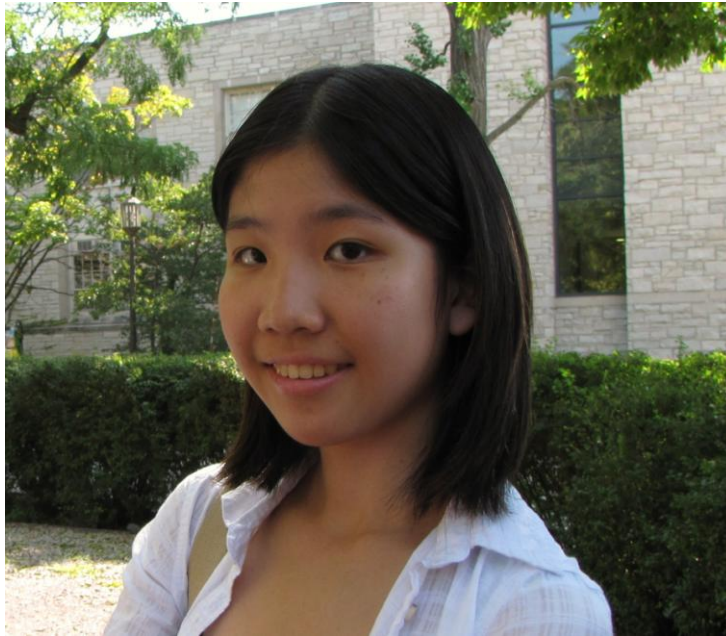
Coach Schafer graciously congratulates the students, "I am very

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proud of all the students and their success in this challenging competition. Their success is due to their hard work and strong interest in the sciences. I hope they have equally great success in the next round of the competition.” Semifinalist and Blair physics team secretary Jessica Shi expresses her gratitude to Mr. Schafer and the Blair physics team captains, William Cai, Jason Hyun, Diwakaran Ilangovan, and Thomas McHale, “I am thrilled to see that we have so many semifinalists again this year. In particular, I would like to thank the captains of the Blair physics team and Mr. Schafer for teaching and encouraging participation.”



Jessica Shi and twelve other Blair Magnet students were named as semifinalists for the 2013 U.S. Physics Team.

### **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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