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CONTACT: Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

Address:

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

Five Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students Named Semifinalists in U.S. Biology Team Competition

Silver Spring, MD—Five students from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program were named as semifinalists for the 2014 U.S. Biology Team on March 17 by the Center for Excellence in Education, the organization which sponsors this search. These students (with each one’s grade level) are Neil Davey (12) and Angel Wen (10) of Gaithersburg; Lara Shonkwiler (9) of Takoma Park; Victor Xu (11) of Rockville; and Catherine Xue (11) of Potomac.

In February over 6,000 high school students nationwide took a written biology test, the first part in the USA Biology Olympiad (USABO). This group included 53 from Blair, which was a record number for the school. Based on scores from this exam, 624, or roughly ten percent, were named as semifinalists for the U.S. Biology Team. Later in March a semifinal exam was administered, and based on these scores, the twenty members of the team will be announced in April. After further testing on June 1-14 at Purdue University, four of these twenty students will be named as members of the 2014 U.S. Biology Team, qualifying them to represent the United States at the 25th International Biology Olympiad to be held in Bali, Indonesia on July 6-13.

Blair Magnet biology teachers, Ms. Angelique Bosse and Ms. Darcy Sloe, serve as co-sponsors of Blair’s biology club, which helps to prepare students for this competition. Coach Bosse congratulates the students, “Ms. Sloe and I are proud of our semifinalists and all of the students who put in hard work throughout the year to prepare for this exam. This included regular biology club meetings, which consisted of breakout sessions as well as presentations on selected topics by team leaders. We congratulate our semi-finalists and hope to continue to have large turnouts at Blair for future USABO exams.”

Semifinalist Catherine Xue expresses her gratitude, “I am really grateful to the Blair Magnet for offering such a nurturing and encouraging environment for science education, both in the classroom and through extracurricular activities. In particular, I

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would like to thank Ms. Bosse and Ms. Sloe for sponsoring Blair's biology club, which has let us expand the scope and depth of the biology curriculum in preparation for challenging competitions like USABO."



Blair Magnet Junior Catherine Xue was named as a semifinalist for the 2014 U.S. Biology 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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