



Board of
Directors:

- Ted Jou
President
- Eileen
Steinkraus
Vice-President
- Sharon Goodall
Secretary
- Dan
Shepherdson
Treasurer
- Beth Kaufman
*General
Counsel*
- Ralph Bunday
Member
- Sherrie Emoto
Member
- Samir Paul
Member
- Lola Piper
Member
- Stephanie
Subramanian
Member
- Emily Yanisko-
Maloney
Member

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2014

CONTACT: Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

**Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Students
Form Research Partnership with Finnish Students**

Silver Spring, MD—Physics teacher Mr. James Schafer and a group of four seniors in the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program participated in the first meeting of the Trans-Atlantic Science School, a partnership between American and Finnish high school science students with the purpose of establishing international collaboration around science at the secondary school level. They spent a week at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research and the world’s largest particle physics laboratory, in Meyrin, Switzerland. During their trip to CERN, the Blair group visited numerous facilities, interacted with many research scientists, and collaborated with their Finnish counterparts.

The partnership is the result of much planning and research by Mr. James Schafer, whose class was first observed by a Finnish science teacher visiting the U.S. as part of the Fulbright Exchange Program. Their numerous discussions led to the desire to bring students from top U.S. and Finnish schools together to collaborate in the field of science. After forming the Trans-Atlantic Science School and securing funding, this inaugural meeting in CERN became a reality. Mr. Schafer hopes to involve more students and school systems in the future, as well as to invite Finnish students to meet with American students at research facilities in this country.

The Blair Magnet students who participated in this international collaboration are Alex Bourzutschky and Avikar Periwal of Potomac, Jessica Shi of Rockville, and Gabby Studt of Silver Spring.

Mr. Schafer reflects on the benefits of the program, “This program is a wonderful opportunity to allow students to take part in an authentic learning endeavor while also interacting with students from another country. The learning that took place went far beyond just the physics at CERN, though the science itself was outstanding. Students also learned about the different cultures, school systems, and lifestyles of their peers. The fact is that we are headed toward more international collaboration in the science community, and the hope is that projects such as this one will help pave the way for even better future

Address:

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

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.

relationships and provide students with experience in working with an international group.”

Avikar Periwal graciously comments, “Going to CERN with Mr. Schafer, Alex, Gabby, and Jessica was a truly incredible experience, and I feel tremendously lucky to have been given such an opportunity. I was able to see the frontier of particle physics research first-hand. Only a handful of people get as close as we did to particle detectors like the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS). Also, I was able to become friends with some wonderful Finnish students who share our interest in the sciences, especially physics. Overall, the trip was one of the best weeks of my life, and I’m immensely appreciative of everybody who made this trip possible.”

Jessica Shi agrees, “Visiting CERN was an incredible and inspirational experience. I was able to view first-hand the inner workings of CERN, from the sheer magnitude and engineering behind the CMS detector to the remarkable computing power in the ‘Grid.’ Additionally, I had the opportunity to become friends with amazing Finnish students who share my excitement for physics. I am truly grateful to Mr. Schafer, the Blair Magnet, and The Blair Magnet Foundation for making all of this possible.”

Gabby Studt relates her experience to studies and international collaboration, “First, visiting CERN and actually seeing the facilities up close were truly amazing. Even better, scientists at CERN were very happy to answer our questions relating to colliders and accelerators, as well as careers in physics. I now have a better idea of how my favorite subjects, including statistics, computer science, and cosmology, are all relevant to the current research in particle physics. Through getting to know the Finnish students, I also got a taste of how exciting it is to work with science enthusiasts from other countries.”

Finally, Alex Bourzutschky reflects on his time at CERN, “It was a unique opportunity to be at the frontier of science, to be able to ask some questions that the researchers could answer and others that they have yet to test. Meeting with the Finnish students was also very nice; I still keep contact with at least one of them. The highlight was being able to enter the CMS detector due to the current maintenance. I thank Mr. Schafer for his tenacity in realizing this trip and his guidance throughout it.”

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



Montgomery Blair Magnet group and Finnish physics teachers and students visited the Large Hadron Collider, the world's largest and most powerful particle collider, at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, in Meyrin, Switzerland. Blair Magnet faculty and students are: (fifth from left) Gabby Studt, (sixth from left) Jessica Shi, (far right) Mr. James Schafer, (second from right) Avikar Periwal, and (ninth from right) Alex Bourzutschky. (Photo courtesy of Periwal.)

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



Montgomery Blair Magnet students (from left) Avikar Periwal and Alex Bourzutschky carefully examine a display at CERN. (Photo courtesy of Periwal.)



Montgomery Blair Magnet students (from left) Gabby Studt and Jessica Shi each pose near a poster of the Antiproton Decelerator during their visit to CERN. (Photos courtesy of Shi.)

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



The Blair Magnet group enjoyed an up-close view of the Compact Muon Solenoid Detector at CERN, while approximately 300 feet below ground. (Photo courtesy of Mr. James Schafer.)

Mr. Schafer's and the four students' trips were partially funded by a grant from the Montgomery Blair Magnet Foundation.

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.

###