



Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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 9, 2014

CONTACT: Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

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 2014 U.S. Physics Team on February 27 by the American Association of Physics Teachers and the American Institute of Physics. These students (with each one's grade level) are Daniel Amir of (12) Bethesda; Alexander Bourzutschky (12), Matthew Das Sarma (11), Alex Miao (9), and Richard Zhu (12) of Potomac; Adam Busis (11) and William Leete (12) of Silver Spring; Alan Du (12) of Gaithersburg; Bendeguz Offertaler (11), Michael Winer (11), Victor Xu (11), and Matthew Yu (10) of Rockville; and Andrew Simler (12) of Takoma Park. This is the third consecutive year that thirteen Blair Magnet students have been selected as semifinalists for this prestigious team.

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. 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 2014 U.S. Physics Team traveling team, qualifying them to represent the United States at the 45th International Physics Olympiad to be held in Astana, Kazakhstan on July 13-21.

Of the more than 180 high schools nationally with semifinalists this year, only three had more semifinalists than the Blair Magnet. In fact, Montgomery Blair was the only high school outside of California to have one of the top five numbers of semifinalists. 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. Blair Magnet physics teacher Mr. James Schafer

Address:

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

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.

serves as coach of the Blair physics team.

Coach Schafer graciously congratulates the students, “This is a great showing for Blair in a very tough competition. The students’ success is a direct result of the hard work that takes place in so many physics classes within the Blair Magnet program. It is also a very positive reflection on the dedication that the students have to the physics team. I especially appreciate all the hard work that the captains of the physics team have put in this year to help prepare everyone and hope that we will have continued success in the next round of the competition.”

Semifinalist Andrew Simler expresses his gratitude, “I didn't go into this test expecting to reach the semifinals, honestly; it just seemed like a fun way to check how well I could apply what I'd learned in Mr. Schafer's mathematical physics class. I am impressed that the Blair Magnet has prepared me well enough to make the cut for the semifinals and am grateful to Mr. Schafer and my classmates for helping me learn this material.”



Blair Magnet Senior Andrew Simler was named as a semifinalist for the 2014 U.S. Physics Team. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Mary Arimond)

Fellow semifinalist William Leete agrees, “I'm glad that I've been able to learn so much in my classes at Blair, especially those dealing with physics, and am grateful to Mr. Schafer for being such a great teacher. I wouldn't have been able to learn as much as I have about many subjects, in particular physics, if it weren't for the Blair Magnet program.”

Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



Blair Magnet Senior William Leete was also named as a semifinalist for the 2014 U.S. Physics Team. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. Kathryn Leete)

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.

###