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**Montgomery Blair High School Teams Sweep Top Places at
Montgomery County Envirothon Competition**

Silver Spring, MD—Four teams of students from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program, took home First, Second, Third, and Fifth Place among 22 teams participating at the 2012 Montgomery County Envirothon, which was held at the county's Agricultural History Farm Park and culminated on April 25. Blair's First Place team will represent Montgomery County at the 2012 Maryland Envirothon Competition, to be held June 20-21 at St. James School in St. James, MD. Furthermore, in the 22-year history of the Maryland Envirothon, Blair has had multiple First and Second Place teams and has even placed among the top five teams in the national contest which follows this state competition.

Members of the First Place team, who are all juniors, include Sharon Chen and Kiran Matharu of Potomac, Vivienne Chen and Lisha Ruan of Rockville, and Tatyana Gubin of Gaithersburg.

Second Place team members, who are all juniors, are Linda Kang, Elena Polozova, and Ashley Yuen of Rockville and Lidya Mesgna and Charmi Patel of Silver Spring.

Members of the Third Place team are senior, Sahaana Arumugam (12) of Rockville, and juniors, Audrey Shi of Rockville, Richard Chen of Gaithersburg, Jason Hyun of Silver Spring, and Pulkit Malik of Olney. Fifth Place team members, who are all sophomores, include Callie Deng and Alan Du of Gaithersburg, Aanchal Johri of Rockville, and Samuel Maynard and Kejin Wang of Silver Spring.

To prepare for the Envirothon competition, students study the state's natural resources, learning to identify and categorize plants and animals, perform soil surveys, estimate wood yield from trees, and resolve natural resource issues. Professionals in the fields of soil science, wildlife management, forestry, and environmental engineering volunteer to instruct the students in the areas of wildlife, forestry, aquatics, and soils. Each year there is a special focus environmental issue, as well, with this year's topic concerning Non-point Source Pollution and Low-impact Development, which the students must

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study, as well. The winner of the state competition will represent Maryland among teams from throughout the U.S. and Canada at the Canon Envirothon, which will be held in Selinsgrove, PA July 22-27.

Blair Magnet chemistry teacher, Mr. Tran Pham, has served as sponsor of all of the school's Envirothon teams for the past 19 years. This year nine Blair teams participated in the Montgomery County Envirothon, with six of them scoring among the top ten teams.

Second Place team member Ashley Yuen thanks Mr. Pham and the Blair Magnet, "I really have to thank the Magnet for giving its students the opportunity to compete and learn about environmental science, something not traditionally taught. In these past two years, I was able to learn so much about the environmental issues we currently face in Maryland, like taking care of the Chesapeake Bay and preventing non-point source pollution. I also have to applaud Mr. Pham for sponsoring this competition for a whopping 19 years now. He does a great job organizing it and making the experience fun."



Envirothon participants from Blair learn about aquatics and testing water quality.



Blair Envirothon team members work on an exam on soils during the Montgomery County Envirothon.

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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