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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Teams  
Take First and Third Place at Maryland Science Bowl**

**Silver Spring, MD**—Teams from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program won first and third place in the Maryland Science Bowl, held on January 15 at the Montgomery College Rockville Campus. The first-place team members are Andrew Das Sarma (team captain) of Potomac, Alexander Briese of Silver Spring, Diwakaran Ilangovan of Gaithersburg, and Sandra Yan and Samuel Zbarsky of Rockville. This team remained undefeated throughout all eleven rounds of competition. Members of the third-place team include Myles Wagner (team captain) of Potomac, Michael Anderson, and Nathan Ng of Rockville, Miles King of Silver Spring, and Charlie Pasternak of Bethesda. The latter team is composed entirely of sophomores and juniors. A third Blair magnet team placed in the top eight of the 26 competing teams. Avikar Periwal (team captain), Alexander Zhang, and Richard Zhu of Potomac, John Anderson of Rockville, and Alan Du of Gaithersburg comprise this team. Amazingly, all of its members are freshmen.

The U.S. Department of Energy sponsors the National Science Bowl and state Science Bowls to encourage high school students to excel in science and math and to pursue careers in those fields. These academic competitions involve more than 13,000 students nationwide and test students’ knowledge in all areas of science.

Montgomery Blair’s first-place team will receive an all expense-paid trip to represent Maryland at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual National Science Bowl competition, which will be held in Washington, D.C on April 23-May 3. The team will compete there against more than 100 teams from across the country for the national title. In addition, the team will receive a special tour of the James Webb Space Telescope Project and have lunch with Nobel Prize recipient, Dr. John Mather, at the Goddard Space Flight Center.

This is the third year in a row that a Blair Magnet team has placed first in the Maryland Science Bowl. Magnet teacher Mr. Tran Pham, who has served as longtime coach of all Montgomery Blair Magnet science bowl teams, explains, “Our students are really young, but they performed really well. One of our teams this year was made of only ninth graders, and they did excellently.” First-place team captain, Andrew Das Sarma comments, “Magnet students are able to retain shocking amounts of scientific information that we find interesting, which is a great asset for Science Bowl. We've put lots of effort into learning and training, so it’s wonderful to get recognized and move

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## Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.

on in the competition.” Fellow team member, Sandra Yan, adds, “Science Bowl was awesome! All of the Blair teams made it to Round 2, which was an amazing feat, given the quality of the other teams there.” Charlie Pasternak of the third-place Blair team agrees, “It was great playing against some of the top science kids in the state.”



,First-place team, from left: Diwakaran Ilangovan, Alexander Briese, Andrew Das Sarma, Sandra Yan, Sam Zbarsky, Coach Tran Pham, and Dr. Robert Brenneman of Montgomery College. Photo courtesy of Kathleen Briese.

# Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



Third-place team, from left: Miles King, Charlie Pasternak, Michael Anderson, Myles Wagner, and Nathan Ng. Photo courtesy of Marli Pasternak.

## **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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