



## HOMESTAY: MAKE FRIENDS ACROSS OCEANS

Bring two groups together that don't speak the same language and live in completely different parts of the world, and what happens? In most scenarios it would lead to uncomfortable silence, but when Odyssey of the Mind is involved, it is the beginning of a fast friendship. Mike Fitch, Pennsylvania, has plenty of experience with this scenario through his involvement with the Homestay Program. His family has hosted ten teams from countries as far-reaching as Poland and Germany.

The Homestay Program is open to International Teams attending World Finals that stay with a U.S. team, especially those not attending WF. It is a great way to help others, learn about different cultures, and form friendships with like-minded individuals. "We've made unbelievable friends through homestay," said Mike, citing several instances of visiting Germany, vacationing with friends made through homestay, and more. Families from the U.S. volunteer their time and homes to host an international team that traveled to WF. They usually last about a week, and the host families show the teams how they live, work, and play.

He also believes it's a great way to form a closer bond with participants, "When you to World Finals you meet so many amazing people, but with Homestay you have time to actually get to know them."

"It has also allowed us to become closer to others involved in Odyssey in our state. Other programs in our area have come to

cookouts, officials within the state have taken the time to come to baseball games or other homestay activities planned."

Aside from becoming closer with Odyssey friends here and abroad, the Homestay Program has other benefits as well, "It exposes our teams to different cultures and gets them excited about learning new languages. It also makes us slow down to visit local attractions," said Mike.

Mike has many fun stories about his family's experience within the program, "Two teams who couldn't speak the other's language learning to communicate over a gallon of ice cream and a bottle of chocolate syrup. Translators were preparing to step in, but to the kids this was just another Odyssey problem where they didn't need adult help."

He also wants to stress that Homestays do not have to be non-stop attractions filled with major events, "When we ask our guests what their favorite part was, it is usually a hike in the woods or a nerf battle, or any other time the kids are just being kids."

He suggests a variety of activities that simply show others what America is like, "A Polish coach told our local paper that the way to stimulate the economy would be to let a group of pre-teen Polish girls loose in an American mall." Other popular activities are going to a drive-in movie, hiking or visiting a park, eating local food, and other things we may take for granted.

"We always try to attend a baseball game when our local minor league team is in town as it's a quintessential American experience. Just like American children, some of our international guests fall in love with the game, while others can wait to leave by the 4<sup>th</sup> inning!"

Mike encourages other families to try the Homestay program, "Coordinators Tom Scott and Chris Eaton do such a fantastic job matching guests and host, making sure the details are covered, that it would be difficult to have an unsuccessful Homestay."

Anyone who is interesting in learning more about the homestay program can email: [odysseyhomestay@gmail.com](mailto:odysseyhomestay@gmail.com).

*(Above picture) Homestay groups bonding over (and losing!) a game of lasertag.*



*"We've made unbelievable friends through homestay.."*

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## Problem Clarifications Reminder

*Stay up-to-date and submit clarifications by visiting [www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/clarifications)*

**Remember:** The problem clarification system is not intended to replace reading the problem and the program guide. Please reread both before submitting a clarification. **The deadline for submitting a clarification is February 15, 2014.**

Do not submit a clarification that asks: (1) if an idea is creative or if one idea would receive more score than another. (No comment regarding subjective scoring will be provided); (2) where the judges or the audience will be during the performance (that is a question for your Tournament Director); (3) to confirm the wording of the problem; (4) if something may be different from an aspect that is specifically required (for example, if the problem requires 1/8" wood for a part, you are not allowed to use 1/16" wood for that required part).

**2014 PROBLEM TEES:** Show off your OotM problem as a team member, or your support as a parent or coach with the newly-designed 2013-14 problem t-shirts. Not only do they make great shirts to show your Odyssey pride, but they can also be worn during competition and are exempt from cost as written in the *2013-14 Program Guide*.

The shirts can be viewed in color and purchased online at [www.odysseyofthemind.com/shop](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/shop). They are available in all the long-term problems, including primary. The shirts feature the problem name and current year along with a fun graphic. They are a fun way to make a great team impression in your school and beyond!



# Great Minds

## Matthew Henson: On Top of the World

AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPLORER (1866 - 1955)

There was a time when the North Pole was an undiscovered, mysterious, even feared place. No plane had yet to fly over it, and no ship could sail through the polar ice field surrounding it. By the 1870s, a race had sprung up to see what brave explorer would be the first to reach North Pole. Over a period of 20 years and many expeditions by Americans, Italians, and Norwegians, one whittled-down expedition made it.

In 1909 Matthew Henson, a member of United States Navy Commander Robert Peary's expedition, became among the first men to reach the North Pole. Commander Peary hired Henson for his sailing skills, but Henson became an instrumental arctic explorer because of his desire and ability to learn the native people's language and skills that kept the expedition alive under such dangerously cold conditions.

Henson was born on a farm in Maryland in 1866 to sharecroppers. By the time he was 12, both his parents died, and he began to hone his explorer's roots by setting out on his own, mostly

walking 40 miles to Baltimore, where he convinced a ship captain to hire him as a cabin boy.

The captain took an interest in the young boy. During his time working for the captain, Henson learned mathematics, navigation, the operations of a ship and how to read books and maps. By the time he was 21, Henson was an experienced sailor.

This experience helped him get a job in Commander Peary's expeditions. His various skills and willingness to learn soon put him ahead of the rest. Henson learned the native language of Eskimos and was able to form friendships that helped this dangerous expedition travel farther than others racing to do the same.

After seven harried attempts and many years, Henson planted the American flag at the North Pole and told Peary who came shortly after, "Today I was the first man to sit on top of the world."

Although Admiral Peary received many honors for leading the expedition, Henson's contributions were largely ignored during the following decades. He was honored at dinners within the African-American community in 1909. He spent most of the next thirty years working on staff in the U.S. Customs House.

Eventually Henson began to be recognized for his important work in helping to explore the North Pole. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan granted a petition to move Henson's remains to Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., where many American heroes and soldiers are buried. In 1996, a Navy ship, the USNS Henson, was named for him. And in 2000, the National Geographic Society gave him its highest honor: the Hubbard Medal for distinction in exploration, discovery, and research.



# 2013-14 Odyssey Angels: The Next Step

There has been an inspiring response to the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Odyssey Angels community assistance program. Many creative ideas have blossomed, and many neighborhoods will be improved. There were a lot of great ideas presented during the Odyssey Angel enrollment period.

There are groups helping neighbors with disabilities, struggling schools, foster kids, animal shelters, retirement homes and more. We consider everyone a hero that chose to enroll and help their community. Unfortunately, only one group can be selected to attend World Finals. Here are the next steps to completing the Odyssey Angel program for this year.

If you have enrolled in the program by completing the online enrollment form, you will be sent a follow-up email that contains the "Progress Report" form for your group.

A representative can fill it out and return it any time before the April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. You must return it by this time in order to be eligible to attend World Finals and present your project at the Creativity Festival.

The form simply asks what you have done so far for your project and requires a reference from the community member(s) you are helping. Keep in mind that your project can be ongoing. You don't have to stop because of the deadline.

Also, remember that you do not have to fill out the form as soon as you receive it. You should submit it when you feel it is the best time to have your work evaluated, as long as it is before the deadline.

After April 1<sup>st</sup> the Odyssey Angels panel will have the difficult task of selecting just one group to attend World Finals. This group will be notified by Odyssey Angels Director Cheryl Micklus and the results will be posted to the Odyssey Angels web site.

There are so many generous and creative entries that although only one group can present at World Finals, many communities around the world benefit — they are the true winners!

Again, we thank the groups for their hard work and look forward to reading about all the good that has been done in those progress reports!

LEARN MORE AT  
[www.odysseyangels.org](http://www.odysseyangels.org)



WANT TO  
 TRY FOR  
 WF 2015?



Becoming an Odyssey Angel is simple. Start looking for neighbors in need. Use your creative problem-solving skills to help — then tell us how you did it. **Enrollment for 2014-15 begins July 1, 2014**

(Left) The Blue Valley Odyssey Angels from Kansas were selected to attend World Finals in 2013, here the group accepted their award on stage at Opening Ceremonies. The group also showed a video about their project, making and donating blankets for foster children (Right) The Blue Valley Angels also spent their time at WF showing others how to make the blankets and donated them to a local foster home.

# Official OotM Souvenirs



**Hoodie Sweatshirt:** comes in kelly green *Odyssey of the Mind* 1978 imprinted in white and navy on the front. Adult sizes S, M, L, XL, \*\*XXL. **\$35**

**Earflap Beanie Hat** comes in navy and white with *Odyssey of the Mind* imprinted in blue. One size fits most. **\$17**

**Girls Tee:** a tahitian blue tee with a fun OotM design that says "Creative Power" surrounded by stars. Youth sizes S, M, L, XL. **\$15**

**Odyssey of the Mind Tee:** is navy with street signs for *Creative St.*, *Omer Ct.*, and *Challenge Way* and *Odyssey of the Mind* imprinted in gray. **\$15**

**iTee:** fitted crew that comes in metal gray, with *iCreate* and *Odyssey of the Mind* imprinted in white. **\$15**

**Flat Brim Hat:** green and black with *Odyssey of the Mind* and a design stitched on the front. The hat is structured with an adjustable snap back. One size fits most. **\$15**

**Owl Parent Pin:** has a parent owl standing behind and cheering for their child. **\$3**

**Super Coach Pin:** comes in a super hero design letting everyone know just how super your coach is. **\$3**

**Problem Pins:** each individual problem pin is a scoop of ice cream, put them all together and make a sundae. The Spontaneous Pin is the bowl that holds it together. **\$3 per pin/\$15 per set of 7**



STAY WARM!



TEES



PINS



Find the entire line of souvenirs and support items at:  
[www.odysseyofthemind.com/shop](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com/shop)



# Odyssey of the Mind Product Order Form

## Support Materials

- packs of **Balsa Wood** (premium grade AAA 36" x 1/8" x 1/8") @ \$20 per 50 pieces.....
- Lots of Problems... and Tips to Make you More Creative** @ \$17 *tips on problem-solving*.....
- The Spirit of Creativity** @ \$15 *Anecdotes about Odyssey of the Mind, written by Dr. Sam* .....
- A Creative Experience DVD** @ \$9.95 *Odyssey of the Mind promotional DVD* .....
- Creative Interaction!** @ \$17 *Includes tips on building effective teams*.....
- Applying Your Creativity** @ \$15 *Discusses different types of human creativity* .....
- Spontaneous Combustion** @ \$7.50 *Booklet of problems and tips*.....
- Odyssey of the Mind Program Guide** @ \$7.50 (one is included with a membership) .....
- Coaches Training DVD** @ \$20 *Tips and Techniques for coaches*.....

## Souvenirs & Pins

- \*Hoodie Sweatshirt @ \$35  S  M  L  XL  XXL\*\* .....
- Girls Tee @ \$15  S  M  L.....
- \*Odyssey Tee @ \$15  S  M  L  XXL\*\* .....
- \*iTee @ \$15  S  M  L  XXL\*\* .....
- 2014 Flatbrim Hat @ \$15.....
- Earflap Beanie Hat @ \$17  Green  Yellow.....
- Sets of Problem Pins @ \$15.....
- Any of the following pins @ \$3 (Specify number of each): .....
- Problem 1  Problem 2  Problem 3  Problem 4  Problem 5
- Primary  Spontaneous  Parent  Coach

Subtotal \_\_\_\_\_

S&H \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Spend \$40 or more and get free Shipping & Handling!**

Orders under \$40 add \$7.50 for S&H. There is no S&H charge for pins.

\* Add \$2 for each XXL.

### Payment Methods (Sorry we do not accept phone orders.)

- **U.S. Mail:** Send this completed form along with a check or Purchase Order, payable to CCI, or with your credit card info to:  
**CCI: 406 Ganttown Road Sewell, NJ 08080**
- **FAX:** Send this form along with a copy of your Purchase Order or credit card information and fax to (256) 256.2798.
- **Online:** Pay by credit card at [www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com).

VISA  Master Card  American Express  Discover

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. \_\_\_\_\_ CSV \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone # \_\_\_\_\_



## Odyssey of the Mind

c/o Creative Competitions, Inc.  
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[www.odysseyofthemind.com](http://www.odysseyofthemind.com)

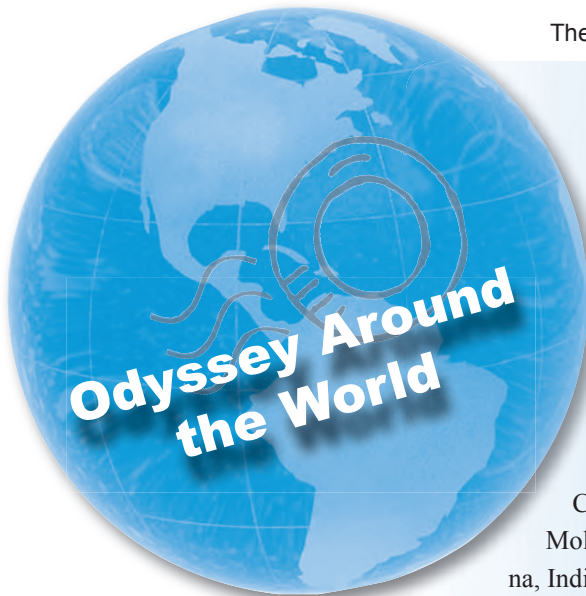
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Hey Teams,  
Always remember the importance of  
working together!

Your friend,  
**OMER**

The *Odyssey of the Mind Newsletter* is published by Creative Competitions, Inc.



## EuroFest 2014

**O**dyssey of the Mind EuroFest 2014 will be held in Slovakia from April 24- 29. It is the third time the event was held there. EuroFest will bring over 1,000 creative minds together from 16 different countries. This will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> festival held.

Here, teams will showcase their Odyssey of the Mind solutions over three days. It will be a chance to celebrate creativity, learn about new cultures, and make new friends from around the world. Additionally, some teams from different countries will be mixed together to solve a special EuroFest problem that will be presented on the final day of the event.

Countries participating include Germany, France, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, Kazakhstan, China, India Togo, USA, and Slovakia.

Last year, several teams from the U.S. traveled to EuroFest in Germany and had a great time representing the country and stretching their creative muscles with new-found friends.

To learn more about EuroFest registration visit: [www.odyseamysle.sk](http://www.odyseamysle.sk)

## Odyssey Anniversaries

**M**any thanks to Associations celebrating a milestone anniversary! They have helped many students express their creativity, make new friends, and much more. They have also helped newer associations get started by being a model and often lending a friendly hand. As always, every association has the important job of helping to mold future engineers, scientists, actors, and more.

There are two states celebrating 35<sup>th</sup> anniversaries:

**OKLAHOMA & VERMONT**

One association is celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary:

**SINGAPORE**

One association is holding a 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary extravaganza!

**BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA**