

NEWS

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Thousands of Creative Minds to Compete in Michigan!

East Lansing M.I. – Over 20,000 students and supporters from around the world will travel to Michigan for the 31st annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals from May 26 – 29 at Michigan State University. Students from different cultures and widely varying economic backgrounds will prove that creativity is universal. They will all demonstrate their unique creative solution to an Odyssey of the Mind problem.

The teams have worked throughout the school year solving an OotM problem and were judged as the most creative in a series of rigorous state and national competitions. At MSU, the teams will represent their state and country in hopes to prove that they are the world's most creative problem-solvers. Odyssey of the Mind has teams throughout the United States and in more than 15 other countries including China, South Korea, Poland, Germany, Singapore, and Mexico.

They will come with interesting costumes, original stage sets, and innovative inventions — all part of solving an Odyssey problem. The problems range from the technical-- with teams building flying devices and vehicles -- to the artistic where teams write and act out humorous performances. Other problems challenge students to solve environmental problems or to learn more about healthy foods.

These problems are judged on creativity and risk-taking. Teams also learn how to manage time and money, how to share ideas and negotiate with one another, and to perform in front of an audience. Because the problems provide for divergent solutions, students incorporate their knowledge and interests into their solutions such as math, history, art, music, science, acrobatics, athletics, robotics, and anything else a child can imagine and enjoy.

Although this is a competition, kids will form life-long friendships that span the globe. Through Odyssey, they learn to communicate and appreciate different cultures. The Odyssey of the Mind “family” is made up of many different cultures, personalities, and ages. There will be 813 teams of “kids” between the ages of eight and 80!

There are also many other events at World Finals, such as the Creativity Festival. Booths from each Odyssey state or country will challenge attendees with creative games. NASA, our sponsor, will have a booth at the festival and will unveil its newest attraction – the earth tent! It's a huge tent in the shape of our earth. Entry to the competitions and festival are free and open to the general public.

During the Opening Ceremonies on May 26th, an Odyssey of the Mind Creativity Award will be awarded to micro-sculpture artist Willard Wigan for being a role model to students with learning disabilities.

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Wigan will accept the award and will also have an exclusive showing of his works at Holden Hall, also open to the public. His sculptures have been shown around the world, and will be coming to Michigan for the first time because of Odyssey of the Mind. He will also unveil his newest sculpture – OMER, Odyssey of the Mind's raccoon mascot.

The competition will conclude with an Awards Ceremony, where over 16,000 people will gather to see the World Champions of Creativity announced.

Like most kids, Odyssey of the Mind team members will exceed expectations when given the opportunity to express themselves. They will also take these important lessons with them to solve real-world problems. "Odyssey of the Mind students are the best minds in the world," says Dr. Sam Micklus, founder.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program for students from K-college. Founded in 1978, it is the oldest and largest creative problem-solving competition in the world. Learn more at www.odysseyofthemind.com and find teams from your town! Simply click "competition schedule" and enter your area.

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