

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Odyssey of the Mind Kids to Show Off Creativity in Maryland

College Park, M.D. – Over 20,000 students and supporters from around the world will travel to Maryland for the 32nd annual Odyssey of the Mind World Finals competition from May 27-30 at the University of Maryland. 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 while appreciating the creativity of others.

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 UMD, 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 Japan, China, Poland, Germany, Singapore, and Mexico.

They will come with interesting costumes, original stage sets, and innovative inventions — all part of solving an Odyssey problem. This year's choice of problems include:

- *Extreme Mousemobiles*: Teams build a vehicle that travels around an obstacle course, but there's a catch: the vehicles can only be powered by mousetraps!
- *As Good as Gold...berg*: Teams build extremely complicated devices that complete normally simple tasks as inspired by cartoonist Rube Goldberg.
- *Classics. . . Lè Tourguide*: Teams create a performance where they travel around the world to spots visited by tourists. Their tour guide is based off of characters from various literary classics such as *Sherlock Holmes* or the *Wicked Witch of the West*.
- *Unhinged Structure*: Eighteen grams of balsa wood and glue are designed into structures that have been known to hold thousands of pounds. This year the structure will hold weight and utilize a working hinge that holds it together.
- *Full Circle*: Teams create an original humorous performance that focuses on something that changes form or appearance three times and then ends up exactly as it started! NASA sponsors this problem.

These problems are judged on creativity and risk-taking. The students learn to apply their creativity to problem solving. 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 to be a world champion, kids will form life-long friendships with their teammates and opponents. These friendships 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 858 teams of "kids" between the ages of eight and 80!

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There are 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 handing out informational materials. Entry to the competitions and festival are free.

There will be special guests including micro-sculpture artist Willard Wigan whose art has been shown around the world. He will have an exclusive showing of his works at Union Gallery on campus. NASA scientists will be on hand to offer exclusive classroom activities about our planet, and Washington D.C.'s Newseum will have representatives at the Creativity Festival and Opening Ceremonies. Newseum is this year's Creativity Award winner. OotM gives out this award each year to a group that has made a positive difference in society using creativity.

The competition will conclude with an Awards Ceremony, where UMD's Comcast Arena will be filled with people excited 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. At World Finals, few will become World Champions, but every team that solved their problem is a winner.

*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. Visit our **World Finals page** and find teams from your town! Simply click "competition schedule" and enter your area.*

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