

Moraga Rotary Club Teams Triumph at 2008 Regional Odyssey of the Mind Competition

By Randolph L. Tom

Before hundreds of cheering supporters at the Odyssey of the Mind Regional Competition held on March 3, 2008 in Pleasant Hill, teams sponsored by the Moraga Rotary Club made repeated trips to the podium to receive their first and second place ribbons. All four teams sponsored by the Moraga Rotary advanced to the State level competition to be held this weekend. More than 150 teams showcased their creative solutions and vied for the chance to advance.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international educational program that provides creative problem solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. They bring their creative solutions to competition at the regional, state and world level. Thousands of teams from throughout the United States and from about 25 countries participate in the program each year.

The Moraga Rotary has sponsored and actively supported the local Odyssey of the Mind teams for three years. They have provided generous financial support, covering competition fees, providing team unifying t-shirts, supplies and labor in building shipping crates and travel expenses. In addition, the Rotary has provided rehearsal facilities when needed.

The Odyssey coaches unanimously agree that the continued interest and support by the Rotary Club is key to the success of the



Front Row (L-R) Megan Adachi, Samantha Bartak, Stefani Henderson, Samantha Garcia, Jarrett Tom, Griffin Bell, Drew Fass, Nicki Bartak, Gwendolyn Tom. Back Row (L-R) Rich Render (Rotary sponsor), Layth Ramatala, Colton Jang, Raymond Tsou
Photo provided

teams.

Odyssey coach Natalee Bartak noted, "We are so grateful for the support of the Rotary Club - Rich Render, our liaison with the Club, has been phenomenally supportive in providing us with everything we need to succeed. I'm glad our teams did so well at the competition since Rich was there and able to see us in action."

Teams from Orinda, Lafayette, Alamo, Danville, San Ramon, Pleasanton, and San Francisco were well represented at the regional competition. The Moraga teams competed in the technical problem, the balsa wood building problem and the

theatrical problem.

With the State competition looming on April 5, 2008 in Brentwood, the teams have been busy devising improvements to their solutions. Teams throughout the state will be shooting for a top spot, with a selected few moving on to the World competition. Last year, one of the Moraga teams placed fifth in the world competition (teams from Lafayette placed 6th and 16th), improving on its ninth place showing the prior year. Let's hope that the odyssey for these dedicated and enthusiastic students brings them to this year's World championship to be held

at end of May in Maryland. Teams know that their community and the Rotary Club are behind them 100%.