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Burton Valley Elementary Odyssey of the Mind team wins State Championship

Submitted by Doug Parker



Front row: David Siu, Raini Chugh, Lauren Brekke, Sophia Moore; back row: Sanika Khamkar, Olivia Parker, Pareesha Chopra Photo provided

Burton Valley Elementary School's Odyssey of the Mind Team A took first place in its division for their performance of "Laundry Land" in the Odyssey of the Mind state tournament. Guided by Coaches Maia Siu and Anna Stubbington, the team won the state competition that was held virtually due to the pandemic.

Beginning in October of 2020, the fifth-grade team met weekly to select and work on their long-term problem. The team chose problem 5, Superhero Socks: A Cliffhanger Beginning, a story of a Superhero in peril that begins with a cliffhanger "ending," but finds a pair of Super Socks that give the hero a special power. The team then continued to design how they would solve the problem and incorporate the predetermined elements into their play. During the winter the team created the parts, wrote the script, and built the set. Finally, because of the pandemic, the team filmed their performance live and added an explanatory video on how the components of the performance were put together.

The team placed fourth in the regional competition in March and, along with all of the other regional competitors, they were invited to compete in the State Tournament. Considering the scores they were given in the regional competition, the team made modifications for the State Tournament where they triumphantly took first place. The team advanced to the World Finals tournament, the results of which will be released later this month.

Odyssey of the Mind is a kid-directed creative problem-solving program involving students from kindergarten through college. Team members work together at length to solve a predefined long-term problem and present their solution to the problem at a competition. They must also participate in the spontaneous portion of the competition by generating solutions to a problem they have not seen before. While the long-term problem solution often takes many months to complete and involves various elements of theatrical performance, construction and design, the spontaneous portion occurs on the day of the competition. Burton Valley placed first in both the long-term and spontaneous state competition.

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