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## Stanley middle schoolers headed to OM World Championships

Submitted by Manju Lind



From left: Sanika Khamkar, Lauren Brekke, Shriya Lind, Sophia Moore, Raini Chugh, Aleah Mathai-Jackson, David Siu Photo provided

spontaneous "think-on-your-feet" challenge.

With many of the team members having worked creatively together since the second grade, a team of seventh-graders will represent Stanley Middle School and Lafayette at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals in Michigan later this month.

Odyssey of the Mind is a decades-old, global, creative competition that engages kids from kindergarten through college in STEAM (Science Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) problem-solving activities.

This is the Stanley team's first time attending the World championships in person and their second time representing Lafayette on the global stage.

This year's competition is expected to draw hundreds of teams from across the United States and around the world. At the competition, each team will compete in an age-appropriate division and present a creative solution to one of five long-term open-ended problems and a

For the long-term problem, the Stanley team reinterpreted the Greek classic "The Iliad," devising a "Trojan Horse" and a figurative "wall." Featuring a required Greek chorus, "Iliad" character, and unusual statue, the team tells the story of two rival grocery delivery companies, a theft, a clever ruse, and the retrieval of a prestigious award. The team's elaborately engineered set, costumes, and props - made almost entirely from recycled and upcycled materials - earned them first place for overall style in their division at the Northern California championships.

While the long-term problem requires months to solve, the spontaneous problem involves solving a surprise verbal, engineering, or combination problem in under 10 minutes. The team captured second place for their division in the spontaneous portion of the Northern California championships.

Since the state competition, the team has been refining their solution and preparing to send materials to the championship. The costs of attending the competition, including shipping their multi-paneled set, are high, so the team is looking to the Lafayette community for support. They will be out in the Lamorinda area raising money for the competition this month.

If you're inspired to support this creative group of middle schoolers and help them represent Lafayette on the world stage, you can donate directly by visiting their campaign at gofundme.com/StanleyMiddleSchool-OM-2023.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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