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## Orinda fifth graders participate in Odyssey of the Mind competition

Submitted by Teresa Yu and Julie Atkinson



Del Ray team Photo provided

In May over 600 teams from across the United States and over a dozen countries, competed in the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals, making it the world's largest youth competition that is not sports-related.

A Del Rey team placed first at regional and state competitions, and then at Worlds, in front of an audience of more than 10,000 spectators from around the world, Del Rey Elementary was announced as the third-place winner for their problem/division.

Their long-term project required them to write a short play for which they would design a robot that encounters three works of art, signals that they are not beautiful, then dismantles and recreates one into something it finds beautiful. The team chose to defend books as works of art, and made their costumes and entire set out of old book pages. Their robot looks like a dictionary, and as it moves across the stage its pages actually turn; the robot's pages define poetry as "incorrect," libraries as "useless," and novels as "wasteful." But the team adamantly defends the importance and beauty of books. In the end, the robot-dictionary inadvertently discovers that the pages of one book are made of mirrors, and it comes to see itself in the mirror-pages, realizing that both robots and books are works of art created by human creativity. The play is poignant, humorous, and most of all a huge celebration of books!

A team from Glorietta Elementary School, who have been working since September on a problem that required them to build a vehicle that could move forward and backward on its own and perform different tasks within the context of a drive-in movie, also traveled to Iowa for the Worlds Finals.

"This team has been working together since they were third graders and their track record is amazing," said team coach Julie Atkinson. "They qualified for World Finals as third graders, but we decided not to go. Then as fourth graders they made it to the State Finals. I'm so happy they had the opportunity to go to Worlds this year!"

Other teams from Lamorinda also competed at the regional, state, and world competitions.



Glorietta team Photo Taksina Eammano

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[back](#)

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