

February 9, 2016

Mount Mercy's Science Olympiad Team Wins Award in Its Inaugural Competition

This fall Mount Mercy added Science Olympiad, a new club, to its extensive club and activity list. Science Olympiad is a science competition that has 25 different events, ranging from knowledge testing to a technical skill such as building a specific device. In some ways it is formatted like a track meet with team scoring, but unlike track, only the top teams will advance to the next level. The tournament starts at the regional level with the top teams advancing to a State Championship and finally to the Nationals.

This is the first year that Mount Mercy has competed in the Olympiad. Under the direction of Mount Mercy science teacher and Coach James Burdick, Mount Mercy won the New Team Award, as they were the best of the new teams with their 23rd place finish. The team placed a very respectable 23rd out of 38 teams.

"The team did much better than they expected they would. Everyone thought they would place last since it was our first year. As it turned out, there were no last place finishes for Mount Mercy in any individual events. We had girls who were very close to medaling (top 6)," Burdick remarked.

Burdick joined the Mount Mercy faculty in late December of 2014 and soon began interesting students in the possibility of forming a Science Olympiad club. The students began preparing last year by competing against each other in events like bridge building, working to see whose bridge could hold the most weight before breaking. This September he again sought interested students and filled the available slots with participants. Many students were able to choose their own events, but a few were drafted to fill empty slots.

The team members practiced at their own pace, working on their specific events. They went to an unofficial invitational prior to the Regional event to see how the team would do. After that Burdick ended up with the 15 girls who would make up his team.

The top finishing team for the Magic was the Cell Biology team, comprised of seniors Molly Dedloff (Gowanda) and Catie Rogers (Cheektowaga). They finished eighth. The wind power team of juniors Kate Haettich (Buffalo) and Marissa Neubeck (Lackawanna) placed ninth. Senior Megan Miller (Buffalo) and freshman Madeline Szwed (Cheektowaga) placed tenth in "It's About Time".

Other team members included seniors Zulmary Cruz (Lackawanna), Elizabeth Kwiecinski (Buffalo); juniors Arielle Brown (Buffalo), Allyson Pfiel (West Seneca), Emmaline Robinson (West Seneca), Avyana Taylor (Buffalo) and Colleen Finn (Buffalo) and sophomore Shea Halpenny (Buffalo).

"I was really proud of how well everyone worked and handled the stress of the tournament day. I was pleased that they stuck with it and did not lose interest as time went on," Burdick remarked.



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Mount Mercy Academy

A Catholic College Preparatory High School for Young Women
88 Red Jacket Parkway | Buffalo, New York 14220 | www.mtmercy.org | T (716) 825-8796 | F (716) 825-0976