

For Immediate Release

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The 2006 Olympics: For Young Mathematicians *Bay Area Math Olympiad celebrates eight years*

BERKELEY, Calif.— The winners of a grueling five-question, four-hour mathematics exam taken by Bay Area middle and high school students will be announced this Sunday at the Bay Area Math Olympiad (BAMO) awards ceremony. The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI), which sponsors the Berkeley Math Circle Program, will be hosting the event on its eighth anniversary this year.

Eighteen out of approximately 250 students from 45 schools in the Bay Area who participated in the exam will be recognized individually with trophies, on top of honorable mentions. The 18 individual BAMO prizes are awarded in three age groups: 11-12th grades, 9-10th grades, and 8th grade and below. There are three top team awards and three top school awards, as well as a grand prize award for highest overall BAMO score.

“The suspense is palpable,” said David Eisenbud, Director of MSRI. “Most of the BAMO participants have spent many hours each week over the past year struggling with BAMO-type problems, guided by weekly sessions at MSRI’s Berkeley Math Circle program. Each of these committed students deserves first place.”

The Berkeley Math Circle program gathers middle and high school students from the San Francisco Bay Area for two hours in the afternoon on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley for a problem-oriented session on a specific mathematical topic. Math Circle now exist also on the campuses of San Francisco State University, the University of San Francisco, San Jose State University and Stanford University. Each has a characteristic style, providing Bay Area enthusiasts with a variety of contexts and approaches. Held by University professors and teachers, the sessions take the form of an interactive discussion between the instructor and students, ranging over a wide variety of topics of mathematics and its applications.

“BAMO was created to nurture the interest of math whizzes and also encourage young minds who have not had a lot of exposure to math,” said co-creator of the exam, Visiting Associate Mathematics Professor at the University of California at Berkeley and Associate Professor of Mathematics at Mills College in Oakland Zvezdelina Stankova. “Drawing in students from math-minded Silicon Valley and culturally diverse San Francisco, BAMO helps bring both worlds together to promote the future of mathematics.”

*MSRI is one of the world’s premiere centers for research in the mathematical sciences, and has been advancing mathematical research through workshops and conferences since its founding in 1982. More than 1700 mathematical scientists visit MSRI each year.

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