



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**America's First National Math Festival Comes to D.C. on Saturday, April 18;  
Invites Families to Discover the Delight and Power of Mathematics in Daily Life**

*Free Public Festival Will Enliven the National Mall with Dozens of Interactive Math Experiences, Featuring Performances by the "Indiana Jones of Mathematics" to a Houdini-like Getaway in the Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden.*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** February 3, 2015—Today, the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) and the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) announced that the inaugural National Math Festival will take place in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, April 18, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The free public celebration, organized in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution, will feature more than 30 unique performances, interactive exhibits, and lectures, with activities to engage toddlers through lifelong learners. Events will take place at the Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden, the S. Dillon Ripley Center, the National Museum of Natural History, the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of African Art, and the Freer and Sackler Galleries, among others.

"Math is all around us—from the colors of the rainbow to the cars we drive and the bridges they drive over, from modern cell phones and Internet commerce to the newest medical technology, from the study of the deep oceans to the study of the stars," said David Eisenbud, Director of the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute, and Festival co-organizer. "This festival is a celebration of math in all its fun and beauty: math everyone can understand and enjoy."

Featured elements of the National Math Festival include:

- **Math Midway:** Celebrate the wonders of mathematics at the *Math Midway!* Presented by the National Museum of Mathematics, this nationally acclaimed exhibition offers more than 20 interactive exhibits that allow you to step into the world of pattern, shape, and number, and to explore the wonderful world of mathematics. From the *Square-Wheeled Tricycle* to the *Ring of Fire*, there's an activity for everyone at the *Math Midway!* (Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden)
- **Who Wants to Be a Mathematician:** In the American Mathematical Society's contest, "Who Wants to Be a Mathematician", high school students will compete with one another by answering multiple choice mathematics questions in a competitive and entertaining quiz show format. The top prize is \$3,000! (Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History)
- **Oblek Olympics:** Oblek is a hands-on 'obstacle' course where contestants slug it out over a range of mathletic challenges. Small teams will walk, jump, and skip through a (non-Newtonian) water challenge; compete in a honey dipper egg-and-spoon style race; and shoot smoke rings like William Tell! Competitors will need to mathematically manipulate the forces of nature to win. (Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden)
- **Escape from D.C.:** Take in this roving troupe of topological Houdinis, also presented by Guerilla Science. Imprisoned in straightjackets, chains and handcuffs, passers-by will be called on to help set a team of professional contortionists free using mathematical subterfuge. The best case is where no bonds or handcuffs need be broken. (Smithsonian's Enid A. Haupt Garden)

- **Design a Kolam:** Young artists ages 8-14 will discover the curved loops and geometric symmetry of this South Indian style of painting, and make their own to take home. (Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries)
- **Geometric Patterns in Islamic Art:** From the Alhambra in Spain to the Taj Mahal, renowned expert Carol Bier will lead an illustrated journey through Islamic art and architecture. (Smithsonian's Freer and Sackler Galleries)

Designed to appeal to math lovers of all ages, the National Math Festival will also feature some of the most influential mathematicians of our time. Among the featured presenters: Dr. Kenneth Golden, Professor of Mathematics and Adjunct Professor of Biomedical Engineering; Dr. Richard Tapia, professor and mathematician at Rice University; and Dr. Steven Strogatz, the Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Applied Mathematics at Cornell University.

"Through these exciting lectures, performances, and hands-on activities, the Festival will also highlight the possibilities that exist through math, and the fun it inspires," said Robbert Dijkgraaf, Director and Leon Levy Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) and Festival co-organizer. "Research by mathematicians everywhere is important in expanding our understanding of the world, and we are immensely proud to partner in this celebration to encourage and support the math of today and tomorrow."

The National Math Festival has received generous support from: Carnegie Corporation of New York, Google, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Simons Foundation, The Charles and Lisa Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, The Kavli Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Research Corporation for Science Advancement, and IBM. Additional support is provided by: National Museum of Mathematics (MoMath), NOVA, and Elwyn and Jennifer Berlekamp Foundation.

A preview of Festival speakers and presenters is available at [www.MathFest.org](http://www.MathFest.org). A detailed schedule of activities will be released in mid-February.

**NEW YOUTH BOOK PRIZE:** The National Math Festival also announces today details of a new youth book prize, to be awarded annually by MSRI in partnership with the Children's Book Council. **Mathical: Books for Kids from Tots to Teens** recognizes the most inspiring math-related fiction and nonfiction books for children of all ages. The 2015 Mathical book prizes will be awarded during a private ceremony on the eve of the public festival, with this year's winning books— and some of their prize-winning authors— to be featured at the Festival on April 18. Additionally, MSRI announces a unique new partnership with the nonprofit social enterprise First Book, to help expand the reach of this year's winning Mathical books. [www.mathicalbooks.org](http://www.mathicalbooks.org)

"The Children's Book Council is excited to partner with MSRI to create a go-to source for math-related books that will spark the interest and imaginations of young readers," noted Nicole Deming, Interim Director of the Children's Book Council. "These titles, each representing a special confluence of literary merit, mathematical inspiration, and enjoyment, will be wonderful additions to any classroom, library, or home."

For more information on the National Math Festival, visit [www.MathFest.org](http://www.MathFest.org), connect on Facebook, or follow the Festival on Twitter [@mathmoves](https://twitter.com/mathmoves).

#### **About the Mathematical Science Research Institute (MSRI)**

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) is one of the world's preeminent centers for collaborative research in mathematics. Since 1982, MSRI's topic-focused programs have brought together emerging and leading minds in mathematics, in an environment that promotes creativity and the interchange of ideas. Over 1,500 mathematical scientists spend time at MSRI's California headquarters each year. MSRI is

known around the world for the quality and reach of its programs and its leadership in basic research, and also in mathematics education and in the public understanding of mathematics. [www.msri.org](http://www.msri.org)

#### **About the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS)**

The Institute for Advanced Study, founded in 1930 as an independent institution in Princeton, New Jersey, is one of the world's leading centers for basic research in the sciences and humanities, where the permanent faculty and visiting scholars have the freedom to pursue some of the deepest theoretical questions without pressure for immediate outcomes. Its reach has been multiplied many times over through the more than 7,000 scholars who have influenced entire fields of study as well as the work and minds of colleagues and students. [www.ias.edu](http://www.ias.edu)

#### **About the Smithsonian Institution (SI)**

Since its founding in 1846, the Smithsonian Institution has been committed to inspiring generations through knowledge and discovery. The Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park and nine research facilities. There are 6,400 Smithsonian employees and 5,500 volunteers. There were 28 million visits to the Smithsonian in 2014. The total number of objects, works of art and specimens at the Smithsonian is estimated at nearly 138 million, including more than 126 million specimens and artifacts at the National Museum of Natural History. [www.smithsonian.org](http://www.smithsonian.org)

#### **About the Children's Book Council (CBC)**

The Children's Book Council is the nonprofit trade association for children's book publishers in North America. The CBC offers children's publishers the opportunity to work together on issues of importance to the industry at large, including educational programming, literacy advocacy, and collaborations with other national organizations. The CBC's members span the spectrum from large international houses to smaller independent presses, and the CBC is proud to partner with other national organizations on co-sponsored reading lists, educational programming, and literacy initiatives. [www.cbcbooks.org](http://www.cbcbooks.org)

#### **About First Book**

First Book provides access to new books for children in need. Since 1992, First Book has distributed more than 120 million books and educational resources to over 150,000 programs and schools serving children throughout the United States and Canada. First Book is transforming the lives of children from low-income families and elevating the quality of education through partnerships with leading publishing companies that make new, high-quality books available on an ongoing basis. [www.firstbook.org](http://www.firstbook.org)