

**PRESS RELEASE
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Oakland/East Bay Math Circle serves middle and high school students

*East Bay students and teachers benefit from free math enrichment program
at Laney College starting Thursday, September 18*

Berkeley, CA – The Oakland/East Bay Math Circle (OEBMC; <http://oebmc.mathcircles.org>) begins its second year of engaging students with math in a fun and exploratory manner by expanding its after-school enrichment program to both middle and high school students throughout the East Bay area. Starting this year, students in grades 6-12 can attend OEBMC at the Laney College G-Complex. The Math Circles will meet on Thursday afternoons at 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm with snacks served at 4:15 pm. Meetings in the fall semester run from September 18 through November 20, 2008 and during the spring semester from February 5 through May 14, 2009.

OEBMC has achieved a diverse ethnic participation and continues to seek to enroll under-represented students who are enthusiastic about math; many are drawn from economically disadvantaged schools, which often lack access to academic enrichment programs.

The OEB Math Circle are taught by mathematics professors and graduate students from Bay Area universities and local math teachers who have participated in a math circle training program, Bay Area Circle for Teachers. The Circle for Teachers runs concurrently at Laney College with the students' OEBMC meetings and covers similar material, yet at an appropriately higher level. On average, 25 students attended the OEBMC each week in 2007-08 and a total of 70 students participated.

Students from last year's Math Circle enjoyed the program: "[Math Circle] was great! I was able to learn more math & have fun," "I had fun and it was all very entertaining, I learned a lot," and "Extremely creative even though we were learning." Brandy Wieggers, OEBMC Director, added, "Math Circle is a unique opportunity for students who enjoy math to come together outside of a school environment and study traditional and unique mathematical topics that are very different from the standard mathematics curriculum. This results in a community for these middle school and high school students to come together and explore mathematics with new friends and top mathematical professional mentors from throughout the Bay Area."

The Oakland/East Bay Math Circle, co-sponsored by the Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) in Berkeley, is offered free-of-charge to students through generous funding from The Firedoll Foundation, S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation and Simons Foundation.

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI, www.msri.org) 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 as an independent institute in 1982. More than 2,500 mathematical scientists visit MSRI each year in Berkeley, CA, many for stays of up to one academic year. The Institute has been funded primarily by the National Science Foundation with additional support from other government agencies, private foundations, academic and corporate sponsors, and individual donors. MSRI is involved in K-12 math education through the annual "Critical Issues" conferences for educators and math circles and Olympiads for students, and public education through its "Conversations" series of public events.