

Math team wins global honors

By Andrea Chang
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Four Silicon Valley middle school students took home honors at an international math competition for primary school students, held this month in Hong Kong.

Led by team coach Ewa Garg, the middle school students competed in the Ninth Po Leung Kuk Primary Mathematics World Contest from July 16 to 20 against 43 teams from countries such as China, India, Japan, Mexico and South Africa. Although many countries sent multiple teams, the Silicon Valley team was the only one to enter from the United States.

Felix Sung, 13, of Miller Middle School in San Jose; Alex Chang, 13, of Menlo School in Atherton; Logan Short, 12, of Redwood Middle School in Saratoga; and Akash Gupta, 13, of Chaboya Middle School in San Jose were chosen for the team. Tryouts were held in April, with 61 fifth- to seventh-graders from 25 Bay Area schools taking the qualifying test.

The team won the third-place trophy in the group prizes and a fourth-place merit trophy for the team prizes. Felix Sung received second honor, equivalent to second place, in the individual prizes.

"I love coaching talented students and taking them for math competitions," Garg wrote in an e-mail from Hong Kong. "I believe that kids learn" and "improve better if they have goals."

The students were not allowed to use calculators or mathematics tables during the competition.

Garg said most math competitions focus on problem-solving mathematics, which is different from the straightforward computational math that is done in

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From left to right:

Elisha Garg (assistant coach), Logan Short, Alex Chang, Ewa Garg (coach), Felix Sung, Akash Gupta, Aaron Garg (assistant coach).

school.

"It requires reasoning, logical thinking and problem-solving techniques," she wrote.

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