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San Ramon student represents USA in international math competition

The International Mathematics Competition was held in Bulgaria

As math contestant Joshua Chan takes his seat beside students from China and Bulgaria, the atmosphere is quiet and tense. Once you start the two-hour test, you calm down, "but the most important thing is to keep your concentration."

Joshua was one of eight American students to take home an award at the Bulgaria International Mathematics Competition (BIMC), which pits over 570 contestants from 30 countries -- including Australia, Iran, Japan and Taiwan -- against each other in elementary-age competitions or the Invitational World Youth Mathematics Intercity Competition (IWYMIC) for middle school students.

"It was a great opportunity (for students) to show their prowess in math," Shopnavo Biswas, a seventh grader from Challenger Middle School in Palo Alto, said adding that the competition allowed him to "go international and meet kids from other countries."

The annual math competition aims to recognize younger students' outstanding math skills and encourage improvement of mathematics and higher-order thinking skills in academic curriculum internationally. On July 4, 16 students competed on four teams from the Bay Area. Windemere Ranch Middle School eighth grader Vinayak Kumar took home an award of merit in the competition.

When personally presented a merit award by Burgas' mayor, Kumar said he felt "very proud and very happy onstage" when he and his coach held the American flag.

Students representing USA were invited to BIMC, selected through a tryout in early February administered and held by MathEdge, a local math competition training and learning center. After 12 weeks of training, a final selection test was administered in late April to select the 16 students for

the competition.

In addition to training at MathEdge for three months, Vinayak spent all day before the trip doing problems in his math book and consulting his coach, Norman Tsai. The eighth grader has competed in multiple competitions including Mathcounts, AMC 8 and AIME "for fun" and hopes to pursue a career in mathematics.

Five out of eight MathEdge elementary students scored individual awards. Silver medalist Kenny Wang and bronze medalist Dianna Pei are both sixth graders from Miller Elementary in Cupertino. Another sixth grader, Kevin Chen from Mission San Jose Elementary in Fremont also won a bronze medal. Earning merit awards were Jonathan Huang in fourth grade at Faria Elementary in Cupertino and Michelle Feng in sixth grade at Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School in Palo Alto.

In the middle school division, three more claimed awards including seventh-grade bronze medalist

Michelle Song from Hopkins Junior High in Fremont and merit award winners Justin Chan who

is a ninth grader from Monta Vista High in Cupertino, as well as Vinayak.



Back row,(L – R):Two Bulgarian team guides, Joshua Chan, Vinayak Kumar, Justin Chan, Jonathan Zhang, Albert Lo, Shoptnavo Biswas, Qing Huang, Michelle Song, Coach Joanna Tan, Coach Norman Tsai.Front row (L-R): Grace Huang, Kenny Wang, Dianna Pei, Michelle Fang, Jason Huang, Kevin Chen, Jonathan Huang, Andrew Xu.