

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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U.S. girls team members all score medals at China Girls Math Olympiad
Seven American high school girls—from San Jose and Seattle, to Boston and Tallahassee—triumphant at international math contest in China for girls

BERKELEY, California – The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) announced today that all seven members of the U.S. girls team won medals yesterday at the 8th China Girls Mathematical Olympiad (CGMO) held in Xiamen in Fujian Province, China. Gold medals were won by Jing-Jing (Shiyu) Li from Sunnyvale, California, a senior this fall at Cupertino High School, and Joy Zheng from Shoreline, Washington, who will be a junior at Phillips Exeter Academy. Three girls won silver medals: Patricia Li from San Jose, California, who recently graduated from Lynbrook High School and enters the Massachusetts Institute of Technology this fall; Carolyn Kim from Tallahassee, Florida, who graduated from Lawton Chiles High School and will attend Harvard; and Elizabeth Synge from Lexington, Massachusetts, a junior this fall at Boston University Academy. Bronze medals were awarded to two girls from San Jose, CA, Ramya Rangan, who will be a sophomore at the Harker School, and Cynthia Day, a sophomore at Lynbrook High School.

“We are elated by the terrific performance of the U.S. CGMO team,” said Robert Bryant, Director of MSRI. “The CGMO provides a great opportunity to encourage young women to study mathematics and to meet and work with others who are enthusiastic about developing their mathematical talents, which are so important for the future of our country. The CGMO experience has a profound effect on the young women who participate, and it provides an inspiration to other students, helping them connect with the fun and accomplishment of solving hard problems.”

The highly competitive, annual international tournament for teams of girls from around the world was held last Wednesday through Sunday, August 12-16. Seven countries participated at this year’s CGMO – China, United States, Russia, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macau, and Singapore – and sent a total of 51 teams. Founded in 2002, the CGMO began as a regional competition for teams of female students from China and other eastern Asian countries (including Russia). It was later expanded to invite teams from more countries, including the United States.

This is the third year that MSRI has sponsored a U.S. girls team at CGMO. The 2009 team’s seven high school students were chosen from the top ranks of the female finalists in the 2009 USA Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO). Its coaches are Zuming Feng, of Phillips Exeter Academy and academic director of the USAMO Summer Program since 2003, and Jennifer Iglesias, who is a sophomore at Harvey Mudd College and was a member of the first two U.S. girls teams and won a gold medal in 2008. The girls wrote an online travelogue with photos to share highlights from their trip to the CGMO (<http://www.msri.org/specials/gmo/2009>).

The girls math team has been award-winning since it first entered the CGMO in 2007. That first year, the U.S. team had five of its eight members earn medals: three girls, all from the San Francisco Bay Area, earned bronze trophies (including Patricia Li, who competed again this year), one girl placed for a silver medal, and another girl—who tied for first place in the overall competition—won a gold medal. The following summer, in 2008, each of the eight girls on the U.S. team came home from the Olympiad with a trophy: five girls won bronze medals (including Carolyn Kim and Joy Zheng, who both competed again this year), one earned a silver medal, and two girls returned with gold medals.

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About MSRI: The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI, <http://www.msri.org>), in Berkeley, California, is one of the world’s preeminent 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 2,000 mathematicians visit the MSRI each year, and the Institute hosts about 80 leading researchers at any given time for stays of up to one academic year. MSRI is involved in K-12 math education through its annual *Critical Issues* in Mathematics Education conferences for educators, math circles and Olympiad competitions, in undergraduate education through its MSRI-UP program, and in public education through its “Conversations” series of public events.