MSRI Mathematical Sciences Research Institute

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U.S. team members all score medals at China's Girls Math Olympiad

Eight American girls win gold, silver and bronze medals at international math competition

BERKELEY, California – The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (MSRI) and the Mathematical Association of America (MAA) announced today that all eight of the young women on the U.S. team that competed at the 11th annual China Girls Mathematical Olympiad (CGMO) have won medals. Among the eight high school and middle school girls on the U.S. team, three students—including one who achieved a perfect score—won gold medals, four students won silver medals, and one student was awarded a bronze medal. The girls-only international competition was held in Guangzhou, the third largest city in China, in southern China's Guangdong Province.

Gold medals were awarded to **Victoria Xia**, 16, from Vienna, Virginia—she received a perfect score and won her second consecutive gold medal—who will be a junior at the Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology; **Danielle Wang,** 15, from Campbell, California, a sophomore at Westmont High School, who also won a gold medal last year; **Alicia Weng,** 16, from West Hills, California, who will be a junior at North Hollywood High School. Silver medals were won by **Cynthia Day,** 17, from San Jose, California, who recently graduated from Lynbrook High School and will be a freshman at Stanford University this fall, she was also a medalist at the 2009 and 2010 CGMO; **Courtney Guo,** 16, a U.S. citizen who is a junior at the International School of Beijing in China; **Laura Pierson**, 12, from Oakland, California, who is the youngest student to ever compete on the U.S. team, she will be a seventh grader this fall at Hillcrest Middle School; and **Jingyi Zhao,** 16, from Culver, Indiana, who will be a junior this fall at Culver Academies**.** A bronze medal was awarded to **Gabriella Studt,** 16, from Silver Spring, Maryland, who begins her junior year at Montgomery Blair High School.

"MSRI and the MAA are elated by the exceptional performance of each member of the U.S. team at the China Girls Math Olympiad," said Robert Bryant, Director of MSRI, which is based in Berkeley. "The CGMO experience has a profound effect on the young women who participate, and it serves to inspire other students, helping them appreciate the fun and challenge of solving hard math problems."

"This international competition provides an invaluable opportunity to encourage young women to develop their mathematical talent and problem-solving skills," said Michael Pearson, Executive Director of the MAA. The highly competitive math Olympiad consists of a rigorous two-day examination that was given on August 10–11. On each day, the girls were presented with four proof-based math problems and had four hours in which to solve them.

This year the CGMO drew 204 girls from ten countries: Japan, Russia, Korea, the United States, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macau, Taipei, Singapore, and China. Founded in 2002, the CGMO began as a regional competition for teams of female students from China and other eastern Asian countries. It was later expanded to invite teams from more countries and MSRI sent the first team from the United States in 2007.

The girls on the U.S. team wrote an online travelogue that shared their impressions during their trip to the 2012 CGMO (see http://www.msri.org/cgmo/2012).

This is the sixth consecutive year that MSRI and MAA have sponsored a U.S. girls team at the CGMO. The team's eight secondary school students were chosen from the top ranks of female finalists in the 2012 USA Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO). The team's head coach is Zuming Feng, a math teacher on the faculty of Phillips Exeter Academy, the leader of the USA International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) team, and the director of the Mathematical Olympiad Summer Program (MOSP) since 2003. Former U.S. team members and gold medalists, Jennifer Iglesias, who enters Carnegie Mellon University's PhD program in mathematics this fall, and Sherry Gong, who will begin a PhD program in mathematics at MIT, returned again as assistant coaches to help coach the team in China and during the team's training in June at the MAA-run MOSP at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

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The U.S. girls team has consistently earned medals since its debut at the CGMO in the summer of 2007. Last year, all eight girls on the 2011 U.S. team won medals (two gold medals, one silver medal, and five bronze medals). In 2010, the team placed second in the overall standings—among 48 teams from ten countries—and, in 2008 and 2009, every member of the U.S. team received a medal.

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. Approximately 2,000 mathematicians visit the MSRI each year, and the Institute hosts about 85 leading researchers at any given time 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, corporations, individual donors, and more than 90 academic institutions. MSRI is involved in K-12 math education through its annual "Critical Issues in Mathematics Education" conferences for educators, math circles, Julia Robinson Math Festivals, the National Association for Math Circles (NAMC) and its website (www.mathcircles.org), and Olympiad math competitions; in undergraduate education through its MSRI-UP program; and in public education through its "Conversations" series of public events.

About the MAA: The **Mathematical Association of America** (**MAA**, **www.maa.org**) is the largest professional society that focuses on mathematics accessible at the undergraduate level. The association members include university, college, and high school teachers; graduate and undergraduate students; pure and applied mathematicians; computer scientists; statisticians; and many others in academia, government, business, and industry. The MAA welcomes all who are interested in the mathematical sciences. It was formed in 1915. There are now more than 20,000 members in this organization.

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