

# Odyssey experiences success in regional competition

by Brandi Tebo

Parkland High School's Odyssey of the Mind teams recently experienced a great deal of success in the statewide competition at North Penn High School in Hatfield, PA.

A total of five teams, comprised of 4-5 members each, met at Parkland High School at the crack of dawn on March 13<sup>th</sup> to prepare for a long day of competing in various exercises of mentality. The competition itself engaged hundreds of children and teenagers from kindergarten through college in a battle of wits. Odyssey of the mind is a long established international program that provides an opportunity for students to problem-solve creatively. Thousands of teams from the United States and 25 other countries worldwide gather to put their creative solutions to the test, hoping to progress through the local, state and world levels. "Going into the competition, we really weren't sure what to expect. There were hundreds of people there—we just had to hope that all of our hard work would pay off," said junior Odyssey of the Mind member, Bret Lesavoy.

Each team had the opportunity to choose for which problem they would like to provide a creative, well thought out and well rehearsed solution. One of the problems required the composition and presentation of a humorous performance in which a food item was accused of being unhealthy and must defend itself

among its food peers. Another entailed the design and construction of a column made out of balsa wood that would support a great deal of weight, while yet

thinking, teamwork and charisma.

"Our team chose to participate a problem that required us to write a script, design a set and perform an eight

junior Priyanka Parekh, member of the Parkland team that received a first place.

After each team presented their solution to the judges and spectators, they progressed to the second part of the competition, known as "spontaneous." During this portion, the teams were presented with a prompt that they were required to think on their feet in order to solve. The problem could range from a verbal prompt in which each member of the team would take turns quickly and creatively responding to the prompt, a hands on in which the team members worked together to manipulate the objects given in order to meet specified criteria, or a verbal hands on problem which is a combination of the two. The scores that each team received in this round were combined with those of the first round in order to determine the first second and third place winners of each problem, where the first, and second place winners earned their chance to progress to the state competition.

Two of Parkland's own teams were given the chance to progress to the state level of competition as a result of their first and second place awards in their respective problems. "It was really exciting when we found out we were moving on to states. We've bonded so much as a team and I can't wait to keep competing!" said Junior Camille Houferak regarding their victory. With success at the next competition, Parkland High School just might be the home of the Odyssey of the Mind world champions.



photo by Molly Weinberg

Junior Nicole Lawler works on the sets for Odyssey of the Mind.

another required students to build a human powered vehicle and camper that would function on a camping trip. Although each of the six possible problems differed greatly, each required high-level, creative

minute skit regarding a lost treasure. Our "treasure" was love, and we made the play into a mini-musical. We built a pretty awesome set out of recycled materials. I have to say it came out really well," said

## New studies show that fatty foods are addictive

by Riddhi Doshi

Everyone says that food like cheesecake, fried chicken and hot dogs are addictive. Scientists have finally confirmed what the rest of the world has been thinking for years. In order to do this they had rats consume fatty foods in large quantities. They found that a diet of fatty foods had the same affect on the brain as drugs such as cocaine and heroin. The way people have compulsive eating disorders can be compared to way many people have drug addictions.

"Doing drugs such as cocaine and eating too much junk food both gradually overload the so-called pleasure centers in the brain," said Paul J. Kenny, Ph.D. Those pleasure centers eventually need more and more of the drug or food in order to achieve the same pleasure, or even to feel normal. Without this a person becomes jittery and moody, this would more than likely lead to a crash. In order to prevent a crash the person has to increase the amount of fatty food they eat over time. In time even willpower cannot stop someone from compulsive eating. The experiment performed showed that the rats ate more of the human food to the point that they became obese. The changes were not just physical. By monitoring the implanted brain electrodes scientists found that, similarly to drugs that cause a high, having a lot



photo courtesy of www.bebo.com

of fatty foods improves tolerance for it.

A study from the Journal of Nature Neuroscience Kenny and his co-author experimented with three groups of rats for 40 days. One group was given rat food, another was given fatty foods for just one hour in the day, and the last was allowed to eat fatty foods whenever they pleased.

The third group became obese and began to eat compulsively. When the scientists gave the rats an electric shock in the presence of food, while the first two groups ran away from food, the third group continued to go toward the food. An unhealthy amount of fatty foods have the same affect on the brain as drugs like heroin and cocaine.

Scientists today note that food that most people eat is much more unhealthy than food older generations ate. This experiment is meant to foreshow what people can become if they rely too heavily on fatty foods. These days it is almost as important, if not more important, to promote a healthy diet as much as promoting drug prevention. An addiction to fatty foods can cause extreme physical changes and can cause diseases like diabetes and heart problems. So as everyone watches First Lady Obama planting gardens to promote healthy eating, understand what is really behind her message, and how important a healthy diet really is.

## PALS attempts to ban "R" word

by Cain Azar

For the past month, PALS club has been launching a campaign to ban the "R" word. This campaign has been going strong for weeks now, and PALS (Peers Assisting Learning Support) has been strongly advocating for the end of the word.

"We are just trying really hard to have people think before they speak. The 'R' word is offensive and we just want everyone to choose a different way to express what they want to say," said junior Anikken Busack.

For many who are unfamiliar with PALS, it is a group devoted to increasing awareness and acceptance of children with special needs.

The president, Greg Coni, and other officers have done their best to put forth the most entertaining meetings and parties for PALS members. Valentines Socials in February as well as other parties are held throughout winter months. All in all, the attempt to disband the use of the "R" word has been a huge target for the club ever since the first club meeting and has spanned until today.

"We believe that it's important to watch what words we say, and never use the 'R' word in a derogatory way. The whole campaign is just to raise awareness for kids in learning support," said junior Steph Kuebler.

The PALS club strongly encourages anyone interested in PALS to contact the President, Greg Coni, or Jess Hilegass. "We are focusing so much on ending the 'R' word because it isn't a nice thing to say. There always are other ways to express things without using such an offensive word," said Officer Jess Hilegass.

The PALS club hopes, in the future, that people will continue to think before they speak and truly put an end to an offensive word.

## U.S. conducts 2010 census

by Sahar Khan

The United States counts every resident in the country every ten years. The purpose of this census is to assist communities by providing with more than \$400 billion in federal funds. This census help raise funds for the betterment of hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, bridges, tunnels, emergency services and other public works projects. The Census also helps determine the number of seats a State can have in the United States House of Representatives.

The Constitution requires conducting the census. It states, "The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of 10 years, in such manner as they shall by Law direct."

The Census would not be possible without the corporation of all the residents of the United States. Census forms were mailed in March of 2010 to all the residents of United States and Puerto Rico. The form consisted of only ten short questions. If one does not mail in the form then a census taker might visit his or her house to ask the questions personally. All of the information provided in the forms will be kept confidential and it is considered a serious crime to disclose any of the information.

"No one can get access to census data. It is rock solid secure," said James T. Christy, Los Angeles Regional Office Director.

The penalty for the violation can result in a fine of \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both. Therefore, U.S. Census Bureau urges everyone to take part in the census to help produce accurate result. "We Can't Move Forward Until You Mail It Back."