

NEWSBRIEFS

Academy Speech and Debate team wins state for the first time in four years

by Cameren Kristensen and Kobie Boslough

The Academy Speech and Debate team took first in the state competition held March 6-8 in Santa Fe. Both the speech and debate teams took first in their respective sweepstakes. The Academy was represented by 50 team members, whose efforts throughout the season allowed the team to sweep several tournaments.

The Academy beat East Mountain, the second place team, by over 200 points. This win is significant for the team because it is the first state championship title won by the Academy in four years. Individual team members will compete in the National Qualifying tournament, which will be held at the Academy in early April.

Science Olympiad takes second in state

by Claire Stratton

This year, Albuquerque Academy's high school Science Olympiad team placed 2nd in the state championship competition. State was held on Feb. 22 at New Mexico Tech. A total of 26 teams participated in the event. The Academy team took second behind the Albuquerque Area Home Schoolers by a margin of 21 points. The Albuquerque Area Home Schoolers will move on to the national championship, which will be held on May 16-17 at the University of Central Florida. The Home Schoolers' win broke the Academy's twelve-year winning streak. "It's always been a close competition between us," said Kathryn Howe '15.

The Science Olympiad competition consists of 24 events in subjects such as anatomy, astronomy, chemistry, entomology, forensics and geology. The Academy placed in the top three in 16 individual events, winning eight of them. By beginning practice earlier next year in order to be more prepared for events, the team is determined to come back next year to win back their state championship title.

Model UN travels to Boston conference

by Caroline Pineda

Albuquerque Academy students traveled to Boston, Mass. on February 20 to participate in their fourth Model UN conference this year. More than a hundred students from different schools attended the conference as delegates representing multiple countries working toward the same goal of solving global issues. For this conference, the Academy students represented the countries of Mali, Afghanistan and the United Kingdom.

Model UN is an extracurricular activity devoted to finding solutions for global problems, such as water and food shortages. According to Model UN member Alina Taveras Shelley '15, Model UN builds skills such as working with people in a formal and diplomatic way.

"I like it because it's not high stress. It's also a good learning experience because you can do more the more comfortable you get," Taveras Shelley said.



Thinkit to provide elementary school after-school education

by Holly Liu

Thinkit is an after-school academic enrichment program for 3rd-5th graders and is part of the Academy's Community Outreach program. In the spring of 2014, the program will run after school from March 31 to May 17, but later it will provide services to students during holidays and over breaks.

An extension of the summer session department, Thinkit blends summer session-style classes with year-round educational opportunities to provide students with highly enriched activities. Thinkit is run by Josh Buchanan, director of Elementary Extensions and Auxiliary Program Services, and activities range from math competition courses to gardening classes.

Thinkit has been in development since the summer of 2013. The purpose of Thinkit is to make a positive impact on the Albuquerque community, according to Buchanan. "The Academy's mission is deeply committed to making a positive impact on the greater Albuquerque community, and I think with that mission we felt like Thinkit could provide that and provide quality instruction in a fantastic learning environment here on campus," Buchanan said. Thinkit is currently for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders, but Buchanan hopes to expand it to include kindergarten to 5th grade. There are no final numbers for applicants yet.

Courses offered in the spring 2014 session range from

academic to physical courses. "We're looking at offering a math competition course right now; we're offering a cross-country program, yoga...a book club called Heavy Medals book club that is based on all the medal winners for the age groups that we're instructing, as well as a variety of sports camps,... an art class...[and a] hands-on science class," Buchanan said.

Teachers for these classes come from different parts of the Albuquerque metro area. "I've spent a lot of time finding solid, fundamentally sound teachers that have a passion for what they're doing and creating their own engaging curriculum to make learning exciting and fun," said Buchanan. Teachers include Matt McCracken from North Star Elementary School, who teaches the math competition course.

Future plans for Thinkit include expanding the course options and providing a wider variety of options for fall classes. Some of the possible fall classes are Lego Robotics and swim lessons. Presently, the program is offering 8 courses. Buchanan is hoping to go up to at least twelve courses by fall.

Online registration for Thinkit can be accessed at the Academy website at www.aa.edu/Thinkit.

Juniors return from Poland MICC

by Hisham Temmar

Academy students Max Bernstein '15 and John Chappell '15 had the unique opportunity to participate in the Model International Criminal Court (MICC) from Feb. 11-23. This event allowed students from Poland, New Mexico, Israel and Germany to rewrite the events of trials against certain war criminals, as well as learn about the complicated matter of international justice.

The MICC is an annual event held in the southern Polish village of Kryzowa. It is a simulation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), a court formed in 2002 in The Hague, Netherlands. Unlike other international war tribunals, the ICC is meant to be a permanent court for cases of crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes, as well as placing responsibility on those accused rather than on a country or group.

The main schedule involved lectures on topics such as international justice, in addition to trial simulations. "We primarily discussed three cases. One was that of Drazen Erdemovic, a soldier in the [Bosnian Serbian Republic] who was threatened and forced by his superiors to kill approximately 100 Bosnian Muslim civilians," Chappell said. The students are separated into sections, organized by role. During trials, there are four distinct groups: prosecutors, defense attorneys,



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN CHAPPELL

ABOVE: Mock International Criminal Court participants pose for a photo in Kryzowa, Poland.

judges and media members. Chappell served as a media member, writing articles and making videos about both the trials and the overall experience. Bernstein served as a judge, and describes what he felt while working with his team of 4, "The experience gave me an appreciation for international justice and law, especially the challenges facing it today, and an understanding of human rights issues facing the world today," Bernstein said.

In order to participate, Chappell and Bernstein applied via the NMRHP (New Mexico Human Rights Project), the only organization in the United States that sends students to the MICC. The offer is

open annually to students in the 10/12 Division. "I love international politics and would like to study international affairs in college. Since international justice is such an important part of the international system, I relished the opportunity to participate in MICC," Chappell said.

Started in 2005, the MICC has expanded to offer a human rights education program, called MICC World, which is very similar to the MICC School, the event in which Bernstein and Chappell took place, as well as a simulation aimed at University students. To learn more, visit their website at www.model-icc.org/.