

ODYSSEY OF THE MIND

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Odyssey of the Mind provides an extra-curricular activity for students that is driven by discovery and exploratory learning. The program teaches 21st Century Skills, is STEAM focused and supports current curriculum standards.

Odyssey Teams include 5-7 students under the guidance of 1-2 adult coaches.

Divisions:

Primary- K- Grade 2

Division I – Grades 3-5

Division II – Grades 6-8

Division III – Grades 9-12

Teams meet weekly from *October to March*. Specific meeting day and times are determined by individual teams and their coaches.

Registration begins in mid-October, based on available space. Participation is limited, based on availability of coaches. *OM is always looking for new COACHES!* No experience required; just time, patience, and an appreciation for "outside-the-box" thinking! Coach Training, mentoring and other resources are provided.

Teams of five to seven students develop solutions to one of six Long Term Problems over several months. Solutions are presented at the State tournament in the form of an 8-minute presentation. The problems usually include a "vehicle" problem, a mechanical problem, a "classics" problem, a balsa wood structure problem and a strictly dramatic problem. The top two teams in each division and problem at the state level are invited to advance to the World competition.

In the Spontaneous problem, teams work together to solve a problem they have never seen before. They may need to build a bridge out of toothpicks, straws and marshmallows or even figure out how to get water out of an imaginary pond. Teams never know ahead of time which type of problem they will be required to solve, so it is an intense "think on your feet" experience.

2015-2016 Season Highlights

Last year, more than 85 students participated in the Odyssey program, representing 8 of Stamford's 12 elementary schools, all 5 middle schools, and Stamford High School. Stamford fielded 13 teams at the Connecticut Odyssey of the Mind Tournament (www.ctom.org).

Of the 13 Stamford teams at the state competition, 10 finished in the top five of their division, and five teams received medals for scoring in the top three statewide in their problem category and age group.

Stamford fielded more teams at the World competition than any other district in the state.

5 Stamford teams advanced to the World competition, including teams representing:

- Davenport Ridge Elementary School
- Westover Elementary School
- Mixed Middle (Rippowam and Scofield)
- Scofield Magnet Middle School
- Stamford High

More than 800 teams from over 25 countries attended the World Finals for a week of activities including competition, STEAM experiences and activities with NASA scientists.

Connecticut had 2 teams place in the top 6 of their Problem / Division and be recognized during closing ceremonies, including the Stamford Division II team.

Stamford's all-girls team from Rippowam and Scofield places 6th out of 60 International Teams in Problem 1 / Division II, outscoring 49 teams from across the US, as well as international teams from Singapore, Switzerland, Indonesia, Canada and India.

History of Odyssey

The Odyssey of the Mind has its roots in the Industrial Design classes of Dr. Sam Micklus, Odyssey of the Mind founder. In 1978, as a professor at Rowan University in New Jersey, Dr. Sam challenged students to solve assignments in unusual and creative ways, and encouraged teams to present their solutions in a competition. The program expanded through NJ High Schools and was originally called Olympics of the Mind. Creative Competitions Inc. was formed and now develops the problems and administers the program at both a national and international level. Now in its 37th year, thousands of teams from cross the U.S. and more than 25 countries participate in the program.