WELCOME TO ODYSSEY OF THE MIND NEWTON-LEE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Program Coordinators:

Farzaneh Riar (Email: fmriar@gmail.com)

&

Meenakshi Sharma (Email: meenakshio3@gmail.com)

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What is Odyssey of the Mind?

Odyssey of the Mind (OotM) is an international educational program that provides creative problem-solving opportunities for students from kindergarten through college. Team members apply their creativity to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics. They then bring their solutions to competition on the local, state, and World level. Thousands of teams from throughout the U.S. and from about 25 other countries participate in the program.

Teams comprised of up to 7 students will choose a problem (see Problem Set). Only 7 minds can work on one problem. So, if a team has 5 members, two team members may be added, but if the team started with 7 members and two decide to no longer be a part of the team, the team cannot add new member because 7 students have already worked on the problem/solution.

In February/March, the teams will compete at our Regional competition. The competition is comprised of two components: a long-term problem and spontaneous problem. The long-term problem is an 8-minute "performance" that the team works on through several months and "performs" to show their solution to the problem. The spontaneous problem is a problem given to the team on the day of the competition, where the team has a specific amount of time to creatively find solution/s for the question. Primary teams are not scored at regional competition, but Division 1 team will be scored and the top teams will advance to States, and ultimately to World Finals.

Newton-Lee Elementary qualifies for 2 divisions:
Primary Division: K,1st,2nd graders
Division 1: 3rd,4th,5th graders

Odyssey of the Mind Teaches Students...
* How to solve a problem and a common goal to accomplish in a specific amount of time.
* Team-building skills by working in groups
* How to tap into creativity through encouraging imaginative paths
* How to solve both small and large problems...for a lifetime!
* How to effectively brainstorm
* How to identify the real challenge
* How to seek out-of-the-box solutions
* How to think on their feet
* How to present solutions and answers in a large group setting
* How to “open up” and express themselves
* How to work independently
* How to work creatively and productively in addition to conventional thinking
Coaches' Responsibilities

In OotM, the coach plays a limited, but important, role. Each Odyssey of the Mind team must have at least one adult, 18 years of age or older, registered as its head coach. Having an assistant coach will lessen the demands assumed by one person. OotM does not assign coaches. The coach of a team is determined by the membership organization.

Since the objective of the Odyssey of the Mind program is to encourage students to solve a selected problem on their own, as the coach/parent, you can't do too much for the team except to help them keep moving in the right direction. Most of the activities that kids are involved in today have a parent/coach telling them what to do and how to do it (lessons, football, cheer, soccer, etc). Rare is it to find a program where the kids get to do what they want, build what they want, write the script with no parental help, make costumes for their performance—all to solve a problem the way that they think is the best/most creative way! Have you ever wondered what your child could do to solve a problem if no adults helped? It’s quite amazing what these little minds can come up with when you ask them to do something all on their own. So, with that in mind, the Odyssey of the Mind program asks that ALL of the work, ALL of the props, ALL of the ideas, etc. come from the team members. The judges at competition will even ask the team members questions, such as who made this? or who came up with this idea? If any adult helped by giving "outside assistance", the team could be penalized 100 points or more, depending on the "offense".

So, this makes coaching Odyssey of the Mind FUN! Yes, you will do exercises to help with team building, to help them learn how to communicate, to help them learn how to brainstorm, to help them decide on how they will make decisions as a team, but ultimately, you are there just as a guide, and you have the unique opportunity to watch them blossom as individuals and as a team.

Who Can Coach?

Coaches come from all professions and from all walks of life. Although teams must have the support of the member school or organization, coaches do not have to be teachers. Frequently, a child’s involvement in the program will generate the interest of the parents. Often times, parents will start the Odyssey of the Mind program in their child’s school and assume a coaching role as a way to get involved in their child’s education.

Roles of an OotM Coach (OM Program Guide, page 7)

* Schedule meetings
* Teach team member how to solve differences
* Help the team understand the limitations of its log term problem
* Oversee brainstorming and spontaneous practice sessions
* Make sure team obtains skills required to carry out ideas
* Facilitate a team without doing the work for the team. Stand back and watch while the team members make all the decisions regarding the problem solution
* Interact with the team to improve the way the team identifies and solves problems.
*Make sure all team members are involved in the process of issue identification, idea generation, solution finding and solution presentation.

*Provide the impetus for the team to develop strategies, generate ideas, evaluate options or reach a decision. This is done in brainstorming sessions and the like.

*Encourage the team members to produce fresh ideas, to think “out-of-the-box,” to work cooperatively together, and to better communication among themselves.

*Provide a safe environment with no criticism of team members as they develop their solution.

*Stay well informed of all problem rules and program guidelines and pass the information on to the team members.

*Read, understand, and make sure team understands the problem, scoring, and clarifications.

*Develop a timeline working backwards from the competition date, including holidays and school breaks, and make sure the team sticks to the timeline.

*Get the team to competition

*Make sure paperwork is done properly

*Be a cheerleader for your team

*Have FUN!
What are my responsibilities as a Parent?

I CAN help!
I CANNOT help!
(Well…… which is it???)

BOTH! You may do many things to help the team, but there are also things you might want to do that would cost the team penalty points. So... how do you know the difference? Here is your own handy, dandy, just-for-parents guidelines!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT PARENTS CAN DO:</th>
<th>WHAT PARENTS CANNOT DO:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport the team to buy things</td>
<td>Suggest what to buy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport the props</td>
<td>Repair props if broken in shipping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach the team members a skill</td>
<td>Suggest to the team which skills to use to solve a problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IF the team asks, such as</td>
<td>Suggest to the team which skills would result in a better-looking or better functioning solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Sewing</td>
<td>Give the teams any ideas for their problem solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Woodworking</td>
<td>Sew anything, paint anything, do anything to contribute to the team’s problem solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Calligraphy</td>
<td>Analysis why something failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Art</td>
<td>Expect perfection from a solution not done by adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Electronics</td>
<td>(or from a solution done by adults, for that matter!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Engineering</td>
<td>Suggest what materials to get from the attic, closet or basement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Principals of simple machines</td>
<td>Fix anything that breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>....Welding</td>
<td>Criticize any part of a team’s solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help provide snacks</td>
<td>Put emphasis on scores instead of fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring spontaneous problem supplies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help get props into the building for the Tournament, even to the staging area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open attics, closets, basements for &quot;garage sale value&quot; materials</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide lots of encouragement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a place to meet/store props</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get everyone and everything to the Tournament</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applaud A LOT and help get props offstage afterwards</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
As you can tell, parents ARE important, as resources for leaning skills, helping get materials, providing moral support, supplementing working brains with nourishment, and generally facilitating the logistics of a working team. Without your encouragement, your child will not develop the self confidence that Odyssey of the Mind promotes.

Since this is a team competition and not a drop-off after school activity, we are asking that EVERY PARENT help and take on a responsibility to help the team prepare for competition. Every parent will have the opportunity to volunteer your time in some way, such as assistant coach, script practice coach, spontaneous coach, prop coordinator, costume coach, snack friend, team building coach, and/or volunteer or judge on tournament day (see below). The kids will benefit tremendously from seeing their parents work together as a team of support for them through this experience. Thank you in advance for your time.

WE NEED YOUR HELP on Tournament Day to:

Be an official (This involves a training on one Saturday usually in February to learn to be a judge.)

Be a volunteer (Each team must provide a volunteer to work at registration, concessions or in the spontaneous holding area for approximately two hours on Tournament Day.)
What are Students Responsibilities?

*Be committed to the team--making as many practices as necessary
*Work on a team of up to seven members under the guidance of an adult coach
*Be willing to work together on a team
*Be open-minded to the ideas of others
*Behave during practice so that the time is constructive
*Respect the coaches
*Spend time on the team creating solutions to a long-term problem
*Come up with all the ideas for their solution and do all the work themselves, as a team
*Present their long-term problem solution in competition within the 8 minute time limit
*Treat everyone as equals on the team
*Learn how to communicate effectively with one another
*Be kind to one another
*Complete all tasks assigned by the team
*Participate willingly with team decisions and practices
2016-2017 LONG-TERM PROBLEM SYNOPSES

Problem 1: Catch Us If You Can
Divisions I, II, III & IV
This is your Odyssey, should you choose to accept it... your team will design, build, and run vehicles from a multi-level Parking Garage to a secret meeting place without being stopped. Vehicles will travel different routes to reach the same destination. During their Odyssey, the vehicles will do something that prevents them from being followed. The performance will include the reason for the meeting, someone that wants to prevent the meeting, a simulation of a scene taking place inside a vehicle as it travels, and a soundtrack to accompany the vehicles’ travel.
Cost limit: $145 USD.

Problem 2: Odd-a-Bot
Divisions I, II, & III
For this problem, teams will create a humorous story about a family that brings home an “Odd-a-Bot.” Instead of being programmed to perform tasks, this Odd-a-Bot robot learns from watching others. Teams will design, build, and operate an original robot that demonstrates human characteristics when performing tasks. In the performance, the Odd-a-Bot will move and learn human actions from watching characters perform activities such as household chores, creating art, and dancing. The Odd-a-Bot learns more than it was expected to learn, and will confuse its actions with humorous results.
Cost limit: $145 USD.

Problem 3: Classics... It’s Time, OMER
Divisions I, II, III & IV
The future and the past collide in this problem about important works of art – both existing and yet-to-be-created. Teams will create and present an original performance about time travelers looking to discover the inspiration for great works of art, little did they know – it was OMER every time! The travelers go back in time — twice into our past and once into our future. They will see OMER inspire two classical artists and a team-created artist from our future. The performance will include how the three works of art positively impact the world, a visual and audible effect that indicates when time travel is occurring, two re-creations of the classic works of art selected from a list, and a team-created work of art.
Cost limit: $125 USD.

Problem 4: Ready, Set, Balsa, Build!
Divisions I, II, III & IV
Creativity can be defined by using only what you have to get a job done. In this problem, teams will design, build, and test a structure made of only balsa wood and glue that will balance and support as much weight as possible. The structure must include sets of balsa pieces of predetermined sizes and quantities as listed in the problem. Some sets must be parts of the structure while others, if incorporated, will receive additional score - the more sets of pieces used, the higher the score! Teams will present a performance with a theme about using what’s available and that incorporates weight-placement and assembling original team creations.
Cost limit: $145 USD.
Problem 5: To Be Continued: A Superhero Cliffhanger
Divisions I, II, III & IV
Creativity is being taken away from the world, and it is up to Odyssey teams to rescue it! Teams will create and present a humorous performance about an unexpected superhero that encounters three different situations where it must save creativity in some way. The superhero will change appearance when it displays its superpowers and go back to blending in with society when not. The performance will also include a clumsy sidekick, a nemesis character, a choreographed battle, and a cliffhanger ending.
Cost limit: $125 USD.

Primary: Movin’ Out!
Grades K-2
Teams will create and present a performance about a group that is moving out of one place and into another. In one scene, team-created props and scenery will make up the first setting. To transform into a new setting, team-made devices will move the scenery and props to a new location. Everything in the setting for the next scene must be made from the transported items. The performance will also include a humorous Moving Character, a reason for the move, and a lost item that is rediscovered in an unusual place.
Cost limit: $125 USD.
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* How to work creatively and productively in addition to conventional thinking
If you are interested in participating: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION BELOW TO REGISTER.

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION: MONDAY OCTOBER 3rd, 2016

Registration Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone Number*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-Term Problem* (3rd, 4th, 5th grade ONLY)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please review the problems and list student’s top two choices:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. __________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. __________________________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you willing to help as a coach?*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are You NLE PTO member?*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES_____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If NO, Please use the following link to become a member. You need to be PTO member, in order to participate in the enrichment program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nlepto.ptboard.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Fee $35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please make the check payable to Newton-Lee ES, and write OotM in the memo.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*required field

Please complete the form along with the registration fee and bring back to school

Attention: Odyssey of the Mind Program

Any question, please contact program coordinators:

Farzaneh Riar (fmriar@gmail.com) or Meenakshi Sharma (meenakshi03@gmail.com)