



**Two students compete in a Science Olympiad event.  
Photo provided by John Ogden**

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## Elementary schools compete at annual Science Olympiad Tournament

By: Kara Szymanski | **Shelby-Utica News** | **Published June 19, 2023**

SHELBY TOWNSHIP — Macomb Community College South Campus in Warren last month hosted approximately 2,500 students, educators and parents from Macomb County and beyond at the 38th annual Elementary Science Olympiad Tournament.

The competition, held May 13, primarily serves public and private schools in Macomb and St. Clair counties.

Teams from 60 different elementary schools competed for medals and trophies in 18 different events involving science, engineering and technology.

Utica Community Schools had two schools in the top three places among teams that competed in the division for K-6 schools. Messmore Elementary School finished in first place, and Roberts Elementary School finished in third place. Disney Elementary School, in the Fraser Public Schools district, finished second in the division.

In the division for K-5 schools, Higgins Elementary School, from the L'Anse Creuse Public Schools District, placed first. Cheyenne Elementary School, from the Chippewa Valley Schools district, placed second, and Princeton Elementary School, from the Lakeview Public Schools district, placed third.

The tournament named Ottawa Elementary School, from Chippewa Valley, as the K-5 division's "rising star," and Disney Elementary took the rising star award in the K-6 division. The rookie teams

singled out for awards were South River Elementary School, from L'Anse Creuse, in the K-5 division, and St. Peter Lutheran School in the K-6 division.

Rachael Penhorwood, head coach of Princeton Elementary, said her son had been waiting for science to become more interesting.

"Science Olympiad has given him exactly the outlet he needed and provided a place where he could excel. It has been so valuable in boosting his self-confidence. Now that he is moving on to middle school, and my younger daughter has joined the program, I get to see the same confidence bloom in her when she realizes that her hard work and enthusiasm is being rewarded with success," she said via email.

In one event, Olympians sent rockets made from 2-liter soda bottles shooting into the air. At another, they were presented with a mystery kit of materials and given 20 minutes to build a tower. Students also attempted to reflect a light off a series of mirrors and hit a target in a matter of seconds. One of the favorite events of the day required students to solve a fictional crime using powder identification, fingerprints, chromatography and other evidence.

When students were not actively competing, there were other science-based activities for them to try. Many of these activities were hosted by other local organizations, such as the Michigan Science Center and the Civil Air Patrol.

Janice Fritz, a parent at Washington Elementary in Marysville, said one thing she loved was how this tournament brought together kids with common interests.

"My Amazing Arthropods Olympian met two students from another school and in minutes they were exploring the grounds for roly-polies together. After separating for other events, they bumped into each other again and were just like old friends. I think it was his favorite part of the whole day," she said in an email.

Macomb Science Olympiad is completely run by volunteers. Its major sponsors include General Motors, Macomb Community College and the Four County Community Foundation.

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