



Contact:
Jenny Kopach
(630) 792-1251 office
(630) 215-8490 cell
jrkopach@soinc.org

For Immediate Release

President Obama Honors Science Olympiad Gold Medal Winners At White House Science Fair in Washington, DC

Oakbrook Terrace, IL — April 22, 2013. Two outstanding Science Olympiad champions and their coaches were honored today by President Barack Obama at the third annual “White House Science Fair”, an event highlighting the achievements of student winners from major national science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) competitions. This is the fourth time Science Olympiad has been lauded by a sitting president; in March of 1992, President George H.W. Bush and Education Secretary Lamar Alexander hosted 180 Science Olympiad dignitaries and students at a Washington, DC ceremony; in October 2010 and February 2012, students and coaches attended President Obama’s inaugural and second annual White House Science Fairs.

Science Olympiad is a Chicago-area based, national non-profit organization founded in 1984 dedicated to improving the quality of K-12 STEM education, increasing male, female and minority interest in science, creating a technologically literate workforce and providing recognition for outstanding achievement by both students and teachers. Nearly 200,000 students and 30,000 teachers on 6,800 teams from all 50 states competed in 350 regional, state and national Science Olympiad tournaments last year.

“For the past 29 years, Science Olympiad has been a springboard for student success,” said Dr. Gerard Putz, president and co-founder of Science Olympiad. “With hands-on STEM events that ignite the imaginations of elementary to high school students, Science Olympiad is uniquely positioned to exemplify the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Project-based learning in a fun, exciting campus setting is our forte, and often leads our participants to college majors and careers in science and technology.”

Background

“When students excel in math and science, they help America compete for the jobs and industries of the future,” said President Obama regarding today’s event. “That’s why I’m proud to celebrate outstanding students at the White House Science Fair, and to announce new steps my Administration and its partners are taking to help more young people succeed in these critical subjects.” At the 2012 White House Science Fair, the President revealed his plan to prepare 100,000 math and science teachers and to train one million additional STEM graduates over the next decade.

Students in attendance at the White House were on the two winning teams from the 2012 Science Olympiad National Tournament held at the University of Central Florida. Representing Solon Middle School in Solon, OH are Achuth Nair and Coach Drew Kirian. From Solon High School in Solon, OH are Stephanie Zhu and Coach Donna Ross. The two teams from the same school district made Science Olympiad history when they both won their division at the 2011 National Tournament, a record unbroken for 21 years. Their winning streak continued in 2012, with back-to-back championships added to their list of accomplishments.

"Student participation in Science Olympiad has afforded our students an opportunity to challenge themselves and develop their skills in a variety of areas – teamwork, knowledge, creativity, discipline and leadership," said Solon High School Principal Erin Short. “Not only has this served our Solon Middle and High School students well at the state and national Science Olympiad competitions, it has also helped them grow increasingly important 21st century skills that will benefit them well into the future.”

####