

Orange County



Academic

Promoting a competitive edge for college and career

Decathlon

NEWSLETTER

Orange County Academic Decathlon (OCAD) Newsletter

Spring 2014

Volume 1, Issue 2

What is the OCAD Newsletter?

It is a semi-annual newsletter that will provide you the latest information trending at OCAD.

Words from students about OCAD

"Academic Decathlon teaches you how to strike a balance between being an academically inclined individual and an actively involved human being. It is so much more than just an academic competition - it fosters community, citizenship, and social awareness. By having you focus not just on one narrow area of study, but rather across ten vastly different disciplines, academic decathlon helps students prepare for whatever life throws at them."

*Elizabeth Knarr, Stanford University,
Valencia HS class of 2012*

For more information about the Orange County Academic Decathlon, please visit: www.ocde.us/decathlon

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What it Takes to Get to State

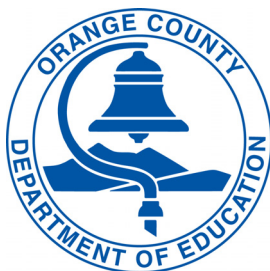
Last month, the hard-working and dedicated decathletes from Valencia, Woodbridge, and Westminster high schools represented Orange County in the California Academic Decathlon (CAD) competition. Valencia placed first overall in the Orange County Academic Decathlon (OCAD) so they competed in Division 1 of the CAD competition. OCAD runner-ups Woodbridge and Westminster received at-large invitations and competed in Division 2 and 3 of the CAD competition, respectively.

Since being invited to compete at the state level just one month ago, each team has kicked their competition preparation into high gear. The high-achieving students prepare in very different ways, but the two most common denominators remain constant – perseverance and teamwork.

On average, the students spend 20-25 hours a week dedicated to preparing for the Academic Decathlon. Approximately 10 hours a week involve preparing with coaches and teammates at afterschool meetings. An additional 10-15 hours a week is spent studying alone or with teammates outside of school, including weekends.

Time and perseverance are not the only factors that determine the success of the teams. Teamwork plays a crucial role in the preparation process. Teammates hold each other to high expectations by creating tests and quizzes for each other, hosting competition scrimmages, and dedicating time to practicing and analyzing each other's prepared and impromptu speeches, as well as perfecting their personal interview techniques. Students who are stronger at one academic subject often tutor and coach their teammates.

Decathletes often refer to their decathlon team as their second family because of the countless hours spent together experiencing the rigors of competition. [continued on page 2]



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Peterson Scholarship Recipient: Kevin Conde

Kevin Conde, a four-year participant on the Corona del Mar High School Academic Decathlon team, is the consummate decathlete. He has served as the team's co-president for the last two years, exemplifying the qualities of academic excellence, leadership, and service to his teammates. Kevin has led team meetings, coordinated team study sessions, and has designed and prepared study materials for his team – contributions he encourages all his teammates to be a part of in order to achieve a common goal.

Throughout his four years of Academic Decathlon, Kevin has demonstrated continuous growth and appreciation in each of the ten events. He has always made Academic Decathlon his highest priority among his varied extracurricular activities, and his focus and hard work are reflected by the 28 medals he has won – receiving at least one medal in nine out of the ten events over the course of four years. Earning these medals is also indicative of Kevin's growth in his capacity to synthesize information, hone critical thinking skills and improve his communication, collaboration, and time management skills. It is because of the depth of his resume and refinement of skills that earned Kevin the 2014 Peterson Scholarship.



Kevin Conde, 2014 Peterson Scholarship Recipient

Outside of Academic Decathlon, Kevin is actively involved in several organizations on and off campus including National Honor Society and Vest-a-Dog Orange County. In addition, Kevin has served as a volunteer tutor and mentor for students at the local elementary school and for the Corona del Mar Middle School Academic Pentathlon team. He is also a research intern at the Beckman Laser Institute and an accomplished pianist.

**The OCAD Peterson Scholarship Award is presented annually to a decathlete who has shown improvement in several areas of the competition, and has demonstrated unusual diligence and persistence. Honorees selected for this award exemplify what the decathlon is all about.*



What Academic Decathlon Means to Me

Written by: Jacob Geosano, Senior at Esperanza High School

Academic Decathlon, to me, means to understand what you are capable of doing. It took me all four years of my time as an academic decathlete to fully understand what I could accomplish. Through the program I had to teach myself to not only know the material I was given, but I had to teach myself to understand the material I was given. I began to question everything, not in the sense of "what," but in terms of "how" and "why." I took every bit of information and tried to apply it somewhere else, to put some life and meaning to thousands of words on several hundred sheets of paper.

Academic Decathlon was always enjoyable to me, for the competition and team effort, but this year it truly was an experience. With a little extra time and effort, and a great deal of satisfaction, I really gleaned a real lesson from my time in the program — a lesson I will apply to every undertaking for the rest of my life — to take everything I have learned and apply it to life, not just the upcoming test. It has been a real honor to participate in Academic Decathlon, and I'll never forget what I learned here.



Jacob Geosano at the 2014 OCAD Awards

You Matter: Volunteers Needed!

Every year, 300 local professionals, educators, and community members come together to serve as judges and test proctors for the Orange County Academic Decathlon (OCAD) competition.

During the "JV" OCAD competition, the service each volunteer provides impacts Orange County 9th and 10th grade students directly. Volunteers are the driving force of the OCAD competitions! Without their time, talent, and professionalism, we would not be able to host these events for our students.

The "JV" OCAD competition offers three volunteer opportunities:

- **Speech Judge**—listening to prepared speeches on a variety of topics.
- **Classroom Test Proctor**—monitoring a classroom of test-takers and administering multiple choice tests.
- **Super Quiz Relay Proctor**—monitoring and scoring a team of decathletes during a live audience relay quiz in a gymnasium.

Do you want to help hard-working and dedicated teens achieve their scholastic goals? Do you want to utilize your personal and professional skills in a fast-paced and engaging volunteer opportunity?

If so, please visit the JV OCAD volunteer registration website <https://ocadjvcomp2014.eventbrite.com> to learn more about our opportunities and to register as a volunteer. **We hope to see you at the Orange County "JV" Academic Decathlon!**



Upcoming Volunteer Dates
**Speech Judge, Test Proctor, or
 Super Quiz Proctor**
May 17, 2014 — Aliso Viejo High School
Register to volunteer at:
<https://ocadjvcomp2014.eventbrite.com>



OCAD, Donations, and Disneyland!

Your financial contributions directly award student achievement. The scholarships earned by our top scoring students are directly funded by donations to the Orange County Academic Decathlon (OCAD)! Last year, contributions from our *Champions for OCAD* program and the Steve Spelman Memorial Fund awarded \$15,000 in college scholarships to 33 student decathletes.

Champions for OCAD is a donation program that will assist with increasing student participation and provide funding for college scholarships, student awards, and developing an outreach program to involve at-risk students.

Steve Spelman was a dedicated board member, volunteer, and donor for 18 years. During his high school years, he was a decathlete at Dana Hills High School.

Did somebody say Disneyland? It's never too late to support the bright futures of our student decathletes!

Anyone who donates by **June 3, 2014** will be entered into an opportunity drawing to win Disneyland tickets. Opportunity drawing will take place at the JV OCAD Awards Ceremony on June 3, 2014.



Donate Now! Here's how...

★ **Option 1:** Donate online at www.ocde.us/decathlon. Click our "Donate" button on the right side of the page.

★ *Note: You do not need to set-up a PayPal account to donate online.*

★ **Option 2:** Download our Champions for OCAD brochure online at www.ocde.us/decathlon. Click on the brochure link on the right side of the page, fill out the form, and send payment to our OCAD address.

★ **Option 3:** Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available, which include various levels of recognition for your organization.

★ Please contact Kristin Rigby for more information at 714.966.4435 or krigby@ocde.us

