

Young Scientists Sweep ACT-SO

By Mohima Oishe '19 and Pretee Amin '19

For the first time, Midwood High School entered the New York City Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) and won a medal in each of the five categories: STEM, humanities, performing arts, fine arts, and business. This year's ACT-SO awards were announced on Monday, May 7, at St. Francis College in Downtown Brooklyn.

Previously known as the "Olympics of the Mind," ACT-SO is a youth program of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Its goal is to give recognition to students who demonstrate academic, scientific, and artistic achievement. Those who participate in the competition must enter in a project under the five categories. The winners received medals and cash awards starting at \$300.

"This year's competition was great," said Mr. Glenn Elert, a physics and research teacher here at Midwood. "We did really well."

He and Ms. Susan Katzoff, a chemistry and research teacher, served as mentors and offered the students help with their posters, presentation skills, and paperwork.

While only 15 students entered the competition, Midwood won a total of 16 medals: five gold, three silver, and eight bronze. Those who won gold, such as Rana Mohamed '19, Kiandra Peart '19, and Calvin Huynh '18, will be going on to participate in Nationals this July. It will be a three day event taking place at the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas where they will be competing against over 8,000 students from other states.

"I am extremely excited for Nationals because it'll be a new experience and I will get the opportunity to meet people from all over the country who are also researching and doing amazing things," said Mohamed.

Peart earned the most medals: a gold in Entrepreneurship for her self-made business Kustoms By Ki, another gold in Poetry for her piece titled "The Nation", and a bronze medal in sculpture.

For Peart's independent business, Kustoms By Ki, she customizes various things such as sneakers, wallets, and purses. To enter this project into the competition, she had to create an 18 page business plan to show marketing strategies such as inventory, cash flow, and two year projections. She then presented the display of her work to a judge who graded her on her content.

"I know the competition will be tougher, but I'm ready for it," said Peart. "Going to Nationals makes me feel like all my hard work paid off."

Mohamed brought home a gold in Engineering for her project of decreasing the energy consumption within a robotic system with the implementation of an energy

monitoring system. She used two types of robotic systems: a two degree of freedom robotic arm that she varied the voltage and frequency on to see how those conditions affected the energy consumption, and a passive walker that she will use to vary the stop length and step frequency to see how those conditions also affect the energy consumption.

"Winning gold was very rewarding because I felt recognized for all my hard work," said Mohamed. "I worked on my research for over ten months."

Huynh entered his project, "Conditions that promote the sub-cellular migration of nucleolin (NCL) to the cell surface," under the category of Microbiology. The nucleolin is a protein that migrates to the cell surface in cases of cancer, HIV, and infection. In his project, he tried to find the mechanisms that

were responsible for allowing the protein (nucleolin) to migrate. He found that only full-length, non-cleaved variations of the protein are allowed to migrate to the cell surface.

"I'm excited to be going to Nationals in Texas and I'm proud to represent NYC Microbiology," said Huynh. "But I'm also a bit nervous because I know that competitions on the National level are notoriously difficult."

As he conducted this research, he was supervised by Dr. Anjana D. Saxena in the Department of Biology at Brooklyn College.

"Winning gold was great because it really was a chance for me to gain some recognition for my research," Huynh added.

Saba Iqbal '18 won a gold medal in the Earth & Space science category for her project on indicating an atmospheric mercury pollution source using moss as a biomonitor. She conducted her project at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she began to intern for her research project around November of 2016. There, her research mentor, Dr. Erin Mann, helped her throughout the two years she was there and made sure everything went smoothly.

"I honestly didn't think I would win because there were so many other great projects there as well," said Iqbal. "Nevertheless, I was really happy."

Although Iqbal received first prize, she will not be attending Nationals due to college orientations and summer classes.

"I'd like more people to participate next year," said Mr. Elert. "Anyone should enter."



Photo Credit: Mr. Glenn Elert

Kustoms By Ki won a gold in Entrepreneurship.

Gilder-Lehrman Hornets Visit Washington D.C.

By Oscar Mendoza '19

The annual Washington D.C. trip took place once again this year from May 21 to May 22. Students who are part of Midwood's Gilder-Lehrman Scholars program, a Social Studies concentrated program, had the opportunity to visit our nation's capital.

Students in this program take four social studies class electives, which include: Urban History, Culture of Sports, America in Vietnam, and Historiography. On this trip, the students were able to bring together all of what they learned in their four elective classes and see how it comes to life in Washington D.C.

"Kids take it seriously. They are open to learning and experiencing new things," said Mr. Eugene Resnick, a U.S History, A.P. U.S. History, Urban History teacher, and chaperone for this trip.

The trip was put together this year by Mr. Matthew Bonavita, a dean at Midwood as well as the teacher for Historiography, one of the electives part of the Gilder-Lehrman Scholars program.

"The students weren't as excited to go visit the White House this year," said Mr. Bonavita, and he believed it was because of President Trump.

Students started the trip off by looking at different memorials. A tour guide led them through Memorial Park and allowed them to view memorials like the Lincoln Memorial, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the Vietnam Memorial.

"My favorite was the memorial for World War II because it was very beautiful. It was dedicated to World War II fighters and was made years after the other memorials were enslated," said Kaithlyn Brathwaite '19.

Later on, the group went to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Smithsonian National Museum, and Smithsonian Air and Space Museum.

One event stood out in particular on the trip, besides the normal touring of the nation's capital in all its glory, and it was when one student, Leah Lottman, led students when they sang the song "Wade in the Water" in front of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial. This song has an extremely special meaning to African-Americans. It was used by Harriet



Photo Credit: Unknown

Gilder-Lehrman students in front of the Washington Monument.

Second Floor Remodel Begins

By William Vamvouris '19 and Abu Butt '19

The hallways on the second floor have started to look brighter and cleaner with the renovations made over the past few months.

"The plan was to take down everything that was up and give the walls a fresh coat of paint," said Mr. Alan Stack, the AP of Organization.

Mr. Stack also stated, "The wall painting is done, but as for the pictures on the walls, I left it up to the teachers of Phys Ed. I think it brightens up the hallways, and it now allows the second floor to be as nice and fresh as the rest of the building."

Mr. Stack said that he doesn't think that the renovations will be fully complete this year, but he's hopeful that everything will be fixed by next year.

"We did something similar on the first floor as well, which should be done later this year," Mr. Stack added.

Ms. Beth Vershleiser, the AP of Social Studies, stated, "For the pictures, the idea was that they were going to shrink all of that and put them in uniform frames. The plaques we have to go through, and we will have to be more selective in what we put up."

Ms. Vershleiser said that in regards to the renovations in the hallways, she thinks it would be something for students and teachers to look forward to.

Zahra Bajwa '19 said, "The second floor is one of the cleanest floors in the school. I think that the renovations being made makes students feel more welcome in the school."

Juliette Kerzhner '20 said, "I think that the hallways on the second floor look very pretty. The renovations are going to make it much more nicer to look at."

Ms. Jenny Ferrarin, a PE Teacher and Midwood alumna, said: "When the renovations are completed, it'll be great. I think it's just a

refresher to make the halls more appealing."

"Putting the pictures back up is the pride of Midwood athletics and the student body," Ms. Ferrarin said.

Ms. Robin Iгла, a Health teacher, stated, "When everything is done, things will look much fresher and much brighter, and I think that it's ultimately going to be a good thing for the school."

Ms. Iгла said it's the first time something like this is being done, so that in itself is significant.

"Overall, it's going to brighten up the second floor."

Ms. Iгла stated, "It's going to help with the pride of the school, and it's going to help with people feeling the history of Midwood and being proud of it, which other schools that have not been around as long as Midwood can't say."



Photo Credit: Damall Ramirez '18

The second floor has been repainted. Soon team photos will be displayed in new frames.

