

**PRESS RELEASE
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First time for U.S. teams of top high school girls to compete at the China Girls Math Olympiad

American girls train at math camp before going to international competition in China

BERKELEY, California – The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (**MSRI**, www.msri.org) announced today that it will send two teams of high school girls, one each from the eastern and western United States, to participate in the 2007 China Girls Mathematical Olympiad, an international competition to be held in central China from Saturday, August 11 to Thursday, August 16. This will be the first time teams from the United States will compete in the China Girls Mathematical Olympiad.

Representing the United States, from the Western states, will be Marianna Mao (from Fremont, CA), Wendy Mu (Saratoga, CA), Colleen Lee (Palo Alto, CA) and Patricia Li (San Jose, CA); and, from the Eastern states, Sway Chen (Lexington, MA), Jennifer Iglesias (Aurora, IL), Wendy Hou (Tampa, FL), and Sherry Gong (Exeter, NH). The eight high school students were chosen from the ranks of the top female finalists in the 2006 USA Mathematical Olympiad. Read an online travelogue with photos from the girls' at: <http://www.msri.org/specials/gmo>

"Team sports can be extremely motivating, and the Olympiad competitions are the pinnacle of this experience in mathematics," commented Dr. David Eisenbud, Director of MSRI. "The opening of the China Girls Mathematical Olympiad to Americans will bring a new group to this dynamic experience. I'm delighted that MSRI can help make it possible for these girls to take part."

Additionally, to prepare for the Olympiad the girls will spend three weeks (July 16-Aug. 6) working together in Dallas at the "AwesomeMath" Summer Program. This program is designed to hone middle school and high school students' mathematical problem-solving skills up to the Olympiad level. AwesomeMath teaches problem solving and is focused on teaching the students to think creatively about mathematical concepts. This preparation period will also give the students the opportunity to get to know one another, build team spirit, and develop the confidence needed to successfully participate in an international competition.

The group will then travel in early August to Beijing and on to Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province in central China, for the competition. Founded in 2002, the China Girls Mathematical Olympiad began as a regional competition for teams of female students from China and other eastern Asian countries (including Russia). China has now expanded this competition to countries from around the world, with the United States, Canada, South Africa, and Australia among the invitees.

"We are thrilled to help prepare these young women for the Olympiad—the experience of a lifetime," said Dr. Laura Haas, IBM Distinguished Engineer and Director of Computer Science, IBM Almaden Research Center. "While women make up nearly half of the working population today, only 28% of computer scientists and only 9% of engineers today are women. At IBM, we believe that it is imperative to actively encourage and support young women's interest in math and science at all levels, and this is one more way we can do so."

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Coaches for the team will be Melanie Matchett Wood, a graduate student at Princeton and the first female to make the U.S. International Math Olympiad team; Zuming Feng of Phillips Exeter Academy and director of the Mathematical Olympiad Summer Program since 2003; and Alison Miller, a member of the USA International Math Olympiad team in 2004.

"The Mathematical Association of America (MAA) has a long history of sponsoring mathematical competitions at the highest level. We are proud to support the U.S. teams' participation in the China Girls Mathematical Olympiad. The team members are outstanding role models for young women talented in mathematics" remarked Joe Gallian, MAA President.

Funding for this project is provided by the IBM Almaden Research Center, Akamai Foundation, Mathematical Sciences Research Institute, Mathematical Association of America, Shiing-Shen Chern Foundation for Mathematical Research, and Sunlin and Priscilla Chou Foundation.

"Math innovation has always been, and continues to be, at the heart of our mission," said Tom Leighton, chief scientist and co-founder of Akamai Technologies, Inc., who serves as a trustee of MSRI. "We are proud to support these young women at this international event. The Akamai Foundation remains committed to helping to promote mathematics education among the next generation of technology innovators, inspiring young people to embrace math."

MSRI is delighted to be able to make this opportunity available to some of the brightest young mathematicians in the country. In addition to providing a core of scientific programs, MSRI is dedicated to enhancing and improving K-12 mathematics education in the United States by providing both ongoing education programs for students and organizing conferences on critical issues in math education for the math community.

The Mathematical Sciences Research Institute (www.msri.org) is one of the world's premiere centers for research in the mathematical sciences, and has been advancing mathematical research through workshops and conferences since its founding as an independent institute in 1982. More than 1,700 mathematical scientists visit MSRI each year in Berkeley, CA, many for stays of up to one academic year. The Institute has been funded primarily by the National Science Foundation (NSF) with additional support from other government agencies, private foundations, academic and corporate sponsors, and individual donors.

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