



December 6, 2009

OLS students show academic strength in Scholastic Olympics

By Susan Steinmueller
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Farmington's Our Lady of Sorrow's eighth-grade boys recently showed their academic muscle when they won first place overall at an annual Scholastic Olympics competition at Brother Rice.

"It's extremely competitive because we are in a competition with children from many different local elementary schools who also have top notch students and an excellent educational background," said Diane Ponagai, associate principal.

"We are very proud of it," she said of the first place trophy. It will be added to others in the school's trophy case collected in the academic competition over the last 20 some years.

The educational opportunity is designed to stimulate, encourage and recognize academic talent among eighth- grade students in area Catholic schools.

Competitions for boys and girls were held at Brother Rice and Marian high schools in late October.

In the Brother Rice-sponsored events for boys, 200 students from 13 schools competed against each other. Marian High School hosted 213 girls, representing 10 elementary schools, in its contests.

Ponagai said teachers look at the academic grades, abilities and standardized tests of students and make recommendations for team members. Those chosen come in early and work with teachers ahead of time to prepare.

Sometimes, she said, the medal is decided by a student's natural talent for the subject combined with preparation.

"The young man that came in first for art, he just happens to have a passion and flair for art," she said of student John Long. "He sat down and drew his shoe. He won first prize."

"We have a young lady who played violin who won second place," she said of student Sara Schultz.

Our Lady of Sorrows boys who took home first-place medals were:

Religion - Hunter Cusick; Logic - Dylan Trapp; American History - Joseph Williams; Art - John Long. In English, Tyler Szymkowski took second place.

Our Lady of Sorrows girls who took home first-place medals were: History - Shannon Stork; Scripture - Juliet Paterson; Heritage Spanish - Maragarita Famcon.

Collecting second place medals were: Theology - Megan Nadolski; Theology Overview - Norah O'Malley; English Grammar - Kristen Gonzales; English Reading Comprehension - Amelia Covert; Fine Arts Drawing - Christina Gee; Fine Arts Instrumental Music - Sara Schultz; Heritage Spanish - Amanda Anguiano; Science Health - Carolyn Whiting; Science Physical Science - Melissa Schneider;

Third-place winners were: Scripture - Margaret Harrington; Theology Overview - Rachael Esper;

Academic Overview - Ria Manimalathu; Fine Arts Drama - Mary Rockwell; Science Life Science - Jacqueline Dailey.

Tyler Szymkowski, 13, who played football this fall, said he enjoyed representing his school academically, too.

"It was basically a standardized test and fill in the blank sort of thing," he said of his English competition. "We had a special study session for each school."

"Sending well-rounded students off to high school is of major importance for everyone at Our Lady of Sorrows," said his mom, Julie. "We are so proud."

ssteinmueller@hometownlife.com | (313) 222-2241
