

## WAYLAND DI PROGRAM'S THIRD ANNUAL TOURNAMENT SUCCESS

*By Rachel Hawley*

"How do you win this board game life, when games like this are getting harder to play?"

Melissa Smith, a seventh grader from Wayland, is desperate to know as she delivers the opening lyric to a parody of the titular song from *RENT*. Clad in a silver costume made completely of duct tape, Smith runs around a life sized Monopoly board, singing about the tension in the life of a Monopoly token fighting to win the game. While accompanying herself on the electric bass, seventh grader Rachel Hawley frets about the possibility of landing on the "Go to Jail" space as well. This intriguing scene can be found only on the set of "Monopoly!: the Musical", a project created by participants of the Destination ImagiNation program.

**RIZBAMM**, the only middle school DI program in Wayland this year, received 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Regional Tournament on March 20th. Their team members are, Zuzu Blom, Michael DiBona, Rachel Hawley, Andrea Meindl, Isabel Pongratz, Melissa Smith, and Brad Varnum. The team chose to do the performance challenge, presenting a performance about the hidden world of Monopoly with each person playing his or her own customized piece. The story focuses on Bass Player, played by Isabel Pongratz, who laments on her inability to roll doubles to get out of Jail. Bass Player is confronted by board game icon Mr. Monopoly, portrayed by a life-sized puppet, who takes bass player into the past to discover the true reason why she was sent to jail (for cheating on rent collected from Ballerina, played by Andrea Meindl). This play featured the opening song *RENT*, live art done by Zuzu Blom, a life-sized Monopoly board designed by Brad Varnum, and the Mr. Monopoly puppet crafted by Michael DiBona. In addition, the team received the da Vinci Award, DI's most prestigious award granted for exceptional creativity. RIZBAMM (an acronym of the team member's first names) will be proceeding not to jail or GO, but to the State Tournament held at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, along with their managers Ramah and Bob Hawley.



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Fifth grade team **The Mario Bros** took 2<sup>nd</sup> Place at Regionals. This team was comprised of members Braeden Obar, Graham Macklin, Will Levy, Sam Levy, and their team manager Jennifer Steel. The team chose the mechanical challenge, a difficult challenge that is usually highly competitive at the tournament. The team created a catapult that propelled balls over a 6ft tall wall into different boxes, while doing a side performance about a boy considering different colleges. "The mechanical challenge was really fun and difficult. Since some of us did the mechanical challenge last year as well, it was a little easier for us this year, because we understood how to approach the challenge a bit better," said team member Graham Macklin. This team incorporated many skills and talents into their performance, including a short cello/bass duet and a football scrimmage.



Taking 3<sup>rd</sup> Place at Regionals was team **Blubber Nuggets**, comprised of team members Abbey O'Shaughnessy, Nathaniel Ames, Nicholas Bobronnikov, Morgen Calverley, Abbey Calverley, and Eric McGonagle. The team did this year's improvisational challenge. Said their team manager, John Ames, "Each year the DI program challenges students to grow both academically and from inside themselves. Although the students learn from the puzzles, presentations and creative exercises, a lot of learning comes from understanding how to work together, compromise and share." Mr. Ames is certainly correct; in order to create a solution to one of the five challenges, a DI team must learn how to work together and compromise, especially for the improvisational challenge, a challenge that requires teams to perform a task randomly given to them with only 30 minutes of planning time in the form of an improvisational skit.



In order to succeed at the DI Regional Tournament, it is crucial to meet the requirements in every aspect of the challenge. But for teams that had an extraordinary component to their challenge, the DI appraisers have a special award. **The Olympians**, a team comprised of Mark McGonagle, Nik Kemper, Olivia Harvey, Tzur Almog, Geoffrey Wang, and team managers Mark McGonagle Sr. and Doron Almog, received the Renaissance Award for their catapulting device, created as part of the mechanical challenge. It is a great honor to receive one of these awards, as they are only given to teams that truly stand out in the judges' minds.



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"The girls had a fantastic experience learning to come up with creative solutions as a team," said Keith Tully, manager of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade team **D.I. Delivery**. Their team members are Sarah Tully, Sophie Mannarino, Emilija Iannace, and Emily Tully. Their team chose the mechanical challenge, which was highly successful among Wayland teams at the tournament.



**Rose Hoe 81**, a third grade team comprised of Pearl Madnick, Ella Laclaire, Alexandra Bochner, and Megan Walsh, chose to solve the performance challenge for the Regional Tournament. Their managers, Allison Laclaire and Kate Walsh, are "Very proud of the kids-they worked hard and did a great job!" explains Walsh. "I think I learned as much as the kids did-about how to let kids work things out on their own."



The Destination ImagiNation program is designed for kids in grades 3-12, but for younger kids, DI has a separate branch. It is called the Rising Stars, and it is for kids in grades K-2. Unlike the older teams, Rising Star teams are presented with one challenge instead of having five challenges to choose from, and they are not scored or competitive. This year Wayland brought with them to the tournament two Rising Star teams: the Buddies and the Wayland Bees.

**The Buddies** team was comprised of members Madison Crozier, Sarina Patel, Angela Chi, Megan Sin, Anna Dong, Manasa Rajeev, and team manager Kieran Johal. They presented a skit about a tree statue created by Mother Nature and her four pet beavers, including a commercial about eating vegetables for a healthy living.



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**The Wayland Bees** was comprised of team members Alicia Chang, Will Obar, Armen Abrahamian, Lucas Alvarado, Nico Alvarado, Mabel Xu, Sophia Mastrangelo, Cassie McGonagle, and their team leaders Lisa Nickerson, Alexia Obar, and Seta Abrahamian. The bright smiles on their faces as they performed their solution were enough to remind those involved in DI just why they go through all of the hard work and time spent for the program.

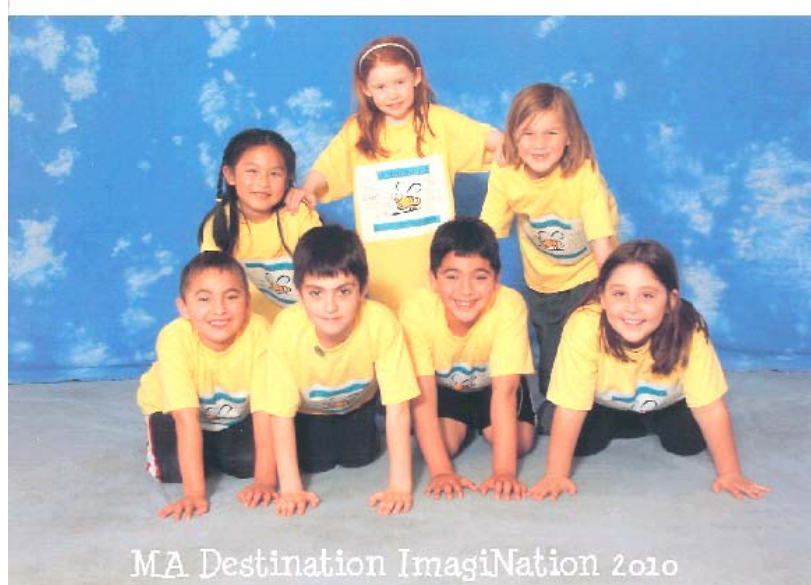


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But, at the end of the day, one team member made a statement that reminded her teammates, team managers, and district coordinators why they do DI. It came from a member of the **Popcorn People**, a fourth grade team doing the performance challenge, which was lead by team manager Susan Green and comprised of members Sierra Blom, Leah Scheidemantel, Marlee Griffin, Lucy Poole, Cassie O'Heron, Tia Rogers, and Lucy Hughes.

Lucy Hughes' comment? "I learned that nothing is impossible, and that whenever you need help you can always count on a friend."



Long live DI! For more information about Destination ImagiNation, go to [www.idodi.org](http://www.idodi.org)