## Virginia Teams Excel at the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals and Virtual World Finals 2019 - 2024

### VOICES Teams Finish Great at the 2024 WF!

A hearty Congratulations to the VA Coaches and Teams on qualifying and competing at the 2024 World Finals level of competition!! The VA Teams experienced the 2024 World Finals with almost 700 teams from across the U.S., Poland, Switzerland, Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Germany and South Korea. You participated in-person long term problem performances complete with live judging teams, WF spontaneous competition, Creativity Festival, International Festival, Opening Ceremony, Float & Banner Parade, Award Ceremony, Arm & Hammer interaction, and most certainly WF pin trading etc. The level of VA participation in the Float & Banner Parade with the Dr. Sam banners, so many members in costumes, and extremely tall float was a new VA record! We all participated in a mandatory tornado warning safety measure whether you were in a hotel or ISU dorm. Four to five towns south of Ames were pummeled by the tornados.

Congratulations to the following teams and coaches whose teams' performances were recognized at the Award Ceremonies. They were knowledgeable of the level of competition to expect and improved their performance by stepping up their creative out-of-the-box skills in problem solving, skit concept design and development, and integration of set-costume-props. VA Top 10 finishers:

- Problem 1, Div 1, 1st place: Women in IP (Coach Kirsten Braun)
- Problem 2, Div 3, 4th place: Arlington Rotary Club (Coach Christina Headrick)
- Problem 3, Div 2, 2nd place: Belmont Ridge MS (Coach Doug Cossa)
- Problem 4, Div 1, 10th place: Poquoson ES (Coach Norm Remchuk)
- Problem 4, Div 2, 4th place: Poquoson MS (Coach Norm Remchuk)
- Problem 4, Div 3, 5th place: Poquoson HS (Coach Norm Remchuk)

How does Norm do that? Norm recruits willing members of his D3 team to develop them as mentors for the younger teams. Emalee McAdams (HS) and Rachel McAdams co-coached the D1 team with Norm. Charlee Libby (HS) co-coached the D2 team with Norm. Troy Wojewoda co-coached the D3 team with Norm. Lindsey Watson co-coached spontaneous workshops with Norm.

I applied an additional World Finals performance measure of VOICES teams I started when I started as AD. I am proud to report that ALL 26 VA teams that competed in the 2024 World Finals finished in the Top 38 placements (not teams) of their respective problem and division.

- 23% of the VA teams finished in Top 10;
- 54% of the VA teams finished in Top 20;

- 92% of the VA teams finished in Top 30; and,
- 100% of the VA teams finished in Top 38.

## VOICES Teams Finish Great at the 2023 WF!

Congratulations to the VA Coaches and Teams on qualifying and competing at the World Finals level of competition. The VA teams experienced the return to the World Finals with almost 800 teams from across the U.S., Poland, Switzerland, Mexico, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, France, Germany and South Korea. You participated in-person long term problem performances complete with live judging teams, WF spontaneous competition, Creativity Festival, International Festival, Opening Ceremony, Float and Banner Parade, Award Ceremony, Arm & Hammer interaction, and most certainly WF pin trading etc.

One of the most valuable experiences at Odyssey of the Mind World Finals is learning from watching other teams' performances in higher divisions and other problems. And hearing comments like "How did they do that?" or said, "I didn't know you could do that", or "I can do that!" And were fortunate to witness out-of-the-box creativity (i.e., Why is this solution so different from the others?). Please capture the team's creative thoughts that occurred during WF for next season. I also ask the coaches and team members to share their experiences with school mates and other Odyssey teams that did not advance. Assess the importance of the team's spontaneous performance to the overall placement in your respective problem and division.

A hearty congratulations to the following teams and coaches whose teams' performances were recognized at the Award Ceremonies. I believe these teams did not come to the WF expecting to win. They were knowledgeable of the level of competition to expect and improved their performance by stepping up their creative out-of-the-box skills in problem solving, skit concept design and development, and integration of set-costume-props. I am sure all teams will leverage their new knowledge from this WF experience.

VA Top 10 finishers:

- Problem 1, Div 2, 4$^{th}$ place: Grafton MS (Coach Diana Demosiuk)
- Problem 2, Div 1, 6$^{th}$ place: Women in IP (Coach Kirsten Braun)
- Problem 3, Div 2, 6$^{th}$ place: Belmont Ridge MS (Coach Doug Cossa)
- Problem 4, Div 1, 8$^{th}$ place: Poquoson ES (Coaches Norm Remchuk, Jason Norville, Emalee McAdams)
- Problem 4, Div 2, 2$^{nd}$ place: Poquoson MS (Coaches Norm Remchuk, Troy Wojewoda, Cassidy Larson)
- Problem 4, Div 3, 3$^{rd}$ place: Poquoson HS (Coaches Norm Remchuk, Heather Goode)

- Problem 5, Div 2, 7th place: Martinsville MS (Coaches Greg Hackenberg, Liz Lynch)

I have a very special shout out to all of Norm Remchuk's co-coaches for their valuable contributions of time, talent, and dedication to the Poquoson teams resulting in Norm accomplishing a crowning moment of 20 years of coaching. Jason, Emalee and Cassidy are also members of the Div III team.

I will share with you an additional World Finals performance measure of VOICES teams I started when I started as AD. I am proud to report that ALL 23 VA teams that competed in the 2023 World Finals finished in the Top 34 placements (not teams) of their respective problem and division.

- 30% of the teams finished in Top 10;
- 52% of the teams finished in Top 20;
- 74% of the teams finished in Top 30; and,
- 100% of the teams finished in Top 34.

Please remember, 226 VA teams competed at the Regional Tournaments; 71 teams advanced and competed at the State Tournament; and 23 teams advanced and competed in the World Finals. Although the U.S. and International Associations are not identical in structure, I consider 100% of VA teams finishing in the Top 34 most remarkable in light of the WF competitors advancing from several thousands of Odyssey teams worldwide.

This is a major accomplishment! The coach's role is always crucial in preparation for World Finals and during World Finals. The coach sets the schedule to repair and assemble the set, rehearsals, WF activities, pin trading, and manage team energy levels and expectations. I am glad I was able to meet many of the coaches and several parents during the 4 days of WF.

## VOICES Teams Post Wins at the 2022 World Finals!!

Congratulations to the VA Coaches and Teams on qualifying and competing at the World Finals level of competition. The VA Teams experienced the return to the World Finals with over 600 teams from across the U.S., Poland, Switzerland, and South Korea. You participated in-person long term problem performances complete with live judging teams, WF spontaneous competition, Creativity Festival, International Festival, Opening Ceremony, Float and Banner Parade, Award Ceremony, Arm & Hammer interaction, and WF pin trading etc.

One of the most valuable experiences at Odyssey of the Mind World Finals is learning from watching other teams' performances in higher divisions and other problems. And hearing comments like "How did they do that?", or, said "I didn't know you could do

that", or "I can do that and more." And were fortunate to witness out-of-the-box creativity (Why is this solution so different from the others?).

A hearty congratulations to the following teams and coaches whose teams' performances were recognized at the Award Ceremonies. I believe these teams did not come to the WF expecting to win. They were knowledgeable of the level of competition to expect and thereby stepped up their creative out-of-the-box skills in problem solving, skit concept design and development, and integrated set-costume-prop production. I am sure they will leverage their new knowledge from this WF experience.

- Problem 1, Div 1, 3rd place: Glebe ES (Coach Kendra Russell)
- Problem 2, Div 2, 5th place: Twain MS (Coach John Clemmer)
- Problem 2, Div 2, 6th place: Swanson MS (Coach Christina Headrick)
- Problem 4, Div 2, 4th place: Belmont Ridge MS (Coach Scott Balwinski)
- Problem 4, Div 2, 6th place: Poquoson MS (Coach Norm Remchuk)

I will share with you an additional World Finals performance measure of VOICES teams I started when I started as AD. I am proud to report that all 24 VA teams that competed in the 2022 World Finals finished in the top 40 teams of their respective problem and division.

- 33% of the teams finished in top 10;
- 75% of the teams finished in top 20;
- 96% of the teams finished in top 30; and
- 100% of the teams finished in top 40.

This is a major accomplishment! This year, the coach's role was most crucial. For many of the coaches, this was their team's first time presenting live to judges and audience. The team may have never seen another team (or competitor) perform at a region tournament or state tournament. The team's performance was based on any coaches training or mentoring the coach may have received, and the team's prior OOTM experience and interpretation of the problem descriptions.

## VOICES Teams Post Wins at the 2022 Virtual World Finals

On behalf of the VOICES organization, I greatly appreciate all the coaches and their team members for conceiving your creative solutions, producing and improving your sets, skits, props, costumes, and practicing spontaneous problems.

At the Virtual World Finals, the top 6 teams from each Problem and Division were recognized. We saw many teams from China and Poland receive awards. Other teams from Switzerland, India, Japan, Russia, and Singapore also placed.

I am proud to recognize the following VOICES teams that received awards.

- Problem 3 Div 2: 3rd place Tabb Middle School, Yorktown
- Problem 4 Div 1: 6th place Sangster Elementary School Team A, Springfield
- Problem 4 Div 1: 5th place Discovery Elementary School, Ashburn
- Problem 4 Div 2: 2nd place Lake Braddock Secondary School, Springfield
- Problem 5 Div 1: 3rd place Patrick Henry Elementary School Team A, Martinsville
- Problem 5 Div 2: 1st Place Harmony Middle School, Hamilton

## VOICES Teams Post Wins at the 2021 Virtual World Finals

On behalf of the VOICES organization, I greatly appreciate all the coaches and their team members for conceiving your creative solutions, producing and improving your sets, skits, props, costumes, and practicing spontaneous problems.

At the Virtual World Finals, the top 6 teams from each Problem and Division were recognized. Saint Leo University from Poquoson was named World Champion for Problem 4, Div 4!! Another first for the Virtual World Finals was VA fielded one Primary team from Sangster ES, Fairfax Station!!

- Problem 1, Div 2: 3rd place Belmont Ridge MS, Leesburg
- Problem 2, Div 2: 9th place Swanson MS, Arlington
- Problem 3, Div 2: 4th place, Forestville ES, Great Falls
- Problem 3, Div 2: 10th place, Langston Hughes MS, Reston
- Problem 4, Div 2: 4th place, Poquoson MS, Poquoson
- Problem 4, Div 3: 6th place, Poquoson HS, Poquoson
- Problem 4, Div 4, 1st place, Saint Leo University, Poquoson

I will share with you an additional World Finals performance measure of VOICES teams I started when I started as AD. I am proud to report that all 20 VA teams that competed in the 2021 Virtual World Finals finished in the top 30 teams of their respective problem and division.

- 35% of the teams finished in top 10;
- 55% of the teams finished in top 20; and,
- 100% of the teams finished in top 30.

- Problem 3, Div II team from Harmony Middle School in Hamilton who placed first in their sub-division.
- Problem 3, Div III team from Battlefield High School in Haymarket who place 7th overall.
- Problem 5, Div III team from Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn who placed 10th overall.

- Three Primary teams:
    - Two from McNair Elementary School, Herndon
    - Waples Mill Elementary School, Oakton

## VOICES Teams Post Wins at the 2020 Virtual World Finals

Congratulations to ALL of the Virginia teams that participated in the first Odyssey of the Mind Virtual World Finals!! You are all Odyssey of the Mind champions!! Regardless of where you finished in your respective problem and division. Please remember this was the first open competition that saw over 800 teams from 27 U.S. Associations and 13 International Partners out of about 100,000 teams eligible from around the world. VOICES has 1,000 teams competing at the region and state tournaments for 30 slots to represent VA at the World Finals.

Your “we can do this” drive and creative initiative prompted your coach and fellow team members to accept the new challenge. I was ecstatic to see 52 VA teams accept this challenge - 50 competition teams and 2 primary teams.

This is a most valuable life-lesson. I also want to thank our 9 very experienced VA WF-class judges who volunteered their valuable time and expertise to review and judge the many videos, pictures, and paperwork.

Just before the VA school districts were shuttered and all school activities were cancelled due to corona virus restrictions and safe social distancing guidelines, your VA Odyssey of the Mind Board cancelled the remaining region tournaments and state tournament. I know the regional boards and their respective teams were very disappointed with the cancellations but understood the abundance of caution for the safety of our OMers.

Then we heard from Odyssey of the Mind International Headquarters that they were working on an alternate competitive approach. We were wondering how this new approach could be compliant with the state social distancing guidelines. Before Odyssey of the Mind announced the rules, I heard from many who were very skeptical and concerned that teams would violate the health guidelines which would result in illnesses across the teams and their families. The rest is history.

Each team submitted a continuous unaltered 15 min video of their 8-min performance and used the additional time to explain how the solution, script, props, and set were created and operated and supported the team solution. The team also participated in a virtual spontaneous problem. Each problem/division was divided into at least 2 subdivisions to reduce the number of teams per judging team. The scores from the highest scoring teams from each subdivision were compared.

**TWO (2) Teams received the Ranatra Fusca Award for Exceptional Creativity**

1. **Problem 1, Division 1: STEUART WELLER ELE SCH, Leesburg, VA**

The team's solution made the judges laugh multiple times at this visit to the dentist! The solution started with a team member in a custom-built dental chair. During the procedure we are able to see what's happening inside the patient's mouth with set pieces constructed to create a giant open mouth. Say "Ahhhh"!! Crossovers in perspective saw prop teeth 'extracted" from the set to become a required obstacle for the vehicle to overcome. The team's design and creation of a dental device to save the world was ingenious. The device served brilliantly to integrate the reaction into the solution to the Problem. A creative dance routine also enhanced the team's theme: "Floss, floss, baby!

2. **Problem 2 Division 2 - Dolley Madison Library, McLean, VA**

This team showed exceptional risk-taking and creativity in their engineering of all three segments of their network device. Each segment of the device employed multiple mechanisms and energy sources to transmit the information seamlessly from one segment to the next with no team member involvement. Each segment was designed with a multi-step process that activated the following segment, separate from the transfer of the message. Information hovered in the air over the fairy godmother's magic wand, rushed down the seven dwarves' mine shaft in a magnet-driven cart, and flew when Robin Hood's "bow and arrow-plane" was launched.

**Special Shout Outs:**

- World Champion Problem 1, Div I team from Steuart Weller Elementary School in Ashburn who placed first place and finished 1st overall out of two sub-divisions.
- Problem 2, Div II team from Swanson Middle School in Arlington who placed third overall out of two sub-divisions.
- Problem 3, Div II team from Harmony Middle School in Hamilton who placed first in their sub-division.
- Problem 3, Div III team from Battlefield High School in Haymarket who place 7$^{th}$ overall.
- Problem 5, Div III team from Stone Bridge High School in Ashburn who placed 10$^{th}$ overall.
- Three Primary teams:
    - Two teams from McNair Elementary School, Herndon
    - Waples Mill Elementary School, Oakton

These are exceptional statistics for the VA teams.

- 14% of the teams finished in the top 10;
- 36% of the teams finished in the top 20;
- 62% of the teams finished in the top 30;
- 82% of the teams finished in the top 40; and,
- 100% of the teams finished in the top 50.

## Virginia on the World Finals Stage, 2019

**Runatra Fusca Award Winner – Belmont Ridge MS, Ashburn VA**

Opposites Distract Division II
This team's use of cardboard in its representation of the Sneaky Character was an innovative use of the material. The character was a broken and then functioning clock made of connected cardboard gears. The Clock wanted to stop time because she could no longer go forward. When she was outed as the Sneaky Character, the Past and the Future came together to replace her missing cardboard gear. They also presented her with new ideas in the form of cardboard lightbulbs with metal bases that when connected caused her metal hat made from a decorated tent to light up and spin at increasing speeds with each new idea.

**Multiple VA teams finsied in the Top 5 finishers of several problems/divisions**:

**Problem 2, Div 3: World Champion Loudoun Valley HS, 1st place**
**Problem 2, Div 2: Glebe ES A, 4th place**
**Problem 2, Div 1: Chesterbrook ES, 6th place**

**Problem 3, Div 2: Harmony MS, 5th place**
**Problem 3, Div 4: University of Lynchburg, 6th place**
**Problem 4, Div 2: World Champion Cooper MS, 1st place**
**Problem 4, Div 2: Poquoson MS, 4th place**
**Problem 5, Div 4: Virginia Tech, 4th place**

Overall, A great p[erforamnmce by VA Teams!!.
Top 10 places: VA placed 12 teams (36%)
Top 11-20 places: VA placed 9 teams (27%)
Top 21-30 places: VA placed 12 teams (36%)