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Odyssey of the Mind Program

By Katie Jelich

Brookfield students are participating in Odyssey of the Mind (OM) this year – a program that encourages students to think “outside the box.”

In this program, children from kindergarten to high school are on a mission to create a project that meets the requirements of one of several problems that they can choose from.

This year Brookfield has two teams. One group, with nine 3rd graders and two younger children, is coached by Lynn Cone, mother of 3rd grader Kimberly.

“I love Odyssey of the Mind,” said Mrs. Cone. “It’s unbelievable. At Brookfield, kids learn how to memorize speeches and declamations. But Odyssey of the Mind allows kids to use their knowledge in a creative way.”

Fourth grade teacher Mrs. Miller coaches another group

that includes eight 4th graders.

Mrs. Miller agrees with Mrs. Cone about the advantages of OM, saying, “I like OM. It makes kids think outside the box, and it encourages problem solving. It’s very encouraging to see kids learning new strategies for solving problems.”

The group that Mrs. Cone coaches has selected a project that requires them to create and present a skit about a great human achievement. The achievement they will be doing is the creation and preservation of the terra cotta soldiers in China.

As part of their project, they have to come up with a reason for the achievement and why it was created. They also have to write and say a poem.

The 4th grade group’s project is sponsored by the NASA, the federal government’s space agency. They

have to build, design, and run machines that can carry items from one place to another. Each group has a \$125 limit to spend on costumes and props.

Kathleen Schiavenza, a 4th grader who is in Mrs. Miller’s group thinks that “OM is fun and interesting. You learn how to solve problems and work as a team. It is also a fun way to learn.”

Odyssey of the Mind conducts competitions for the groups, which come from all over the world. The regional competition will be held at Natomas High School on March 15. At that competition, one team from each age group is selected to go into the national competition.

Judges look for cleverness, creativity, and humor, as well as evidence that the projects are student created and directed rather than projects that are largely the products of adults.

New Students at Brookfield School

By Alex Darwish

Every year, Brookfield School attracts many new students because of its reputation for teaching great academic learning skills. These talented kids, who come from many different schools, usually have positive things to say about Brookfield once they have been here for a while.

For instance, 6th grader Matthew Spindler is new to Brookfield this year. He says, “The academics and the friendly environment make Brookfield a good place to learn. We have good teachers, and having small class sizes, teachers can give each

and every student extra attention.”

Matt lives in Stockton. Despite the long commute, he comes to Brookfield because it is such a great opportunity to learn. He says coming here is worth the 45-minute drive. He often does his homework in the car as his parents drive him back and forth.

Fourth grader McKenny Houk said Brookfield is a good place to make friends. He said he has met a lot of new people since arriving here at the beginning of the school year.

First grader Quaid O’Donnell also enjoys his

new school. Along with many other students, he says he likes the new rule where the students can play four square out on the blacktop at break.

Brookfield has gained nine new students this year, in addition to the pre-1sters who are new to school. Mrs. Ashizawa said the number of new students changes every year.

All of the new students who were interviewed said they think that it easier to learn here because they know no question is “stupid.” They also know that they can feel comfortable making mistakes.