

Hardin Park Team Takes Battle of the Books

Written by Marshal Ashcraft, Watauga Schools
Friday, 21 March 2014 09:01

The Hardin Park School Gold Team has won the elementary grades championship in the Watauga County Schools Battle of the Books competition held Tuesday, March 18th, duplicating the achievement of a different Hardin Park Gold Team in the middle school Battle of the Books held one week earlier.

The elementary grade competition in Battle of the Books is for students in fourth and fifth grades. The middle school Battle of the Books is for students in grades six through eight.

The Hardin Park Gold elementary grades team includes Makayla Barnes, Tucker Brown, Lydia Rothrock, Ellery Rushing, Mason Stewart, and Ella Triplett. The team is coached by AIG Specialist Emily Rothrock.

Finishing second in the competition was the Bethel Blue Team with Alexis Eggers, Brandon Eggers, Grace McClure, Haleigh Lawson, Holden Perry, Isaac Synder, Parker Lawrence and Tyler Ward. The Blowing Rock Green Team, which includes Kendall Blackburn, Sam Brandon, Chase Brown, Farrah Cole, Thomas Cotton, Ben Critcher, Carson Dillman, Hastings Holt, Sarah Scheurer and Harper Shanly, took third place.

Bethel's Blue Team was coached by Bethel's Media Specialist Mitzi London. The Blowing Rock Green Team was coached by Blowing Rock Media Specialist Carol Critcher and by Harriet Stepuch, AIG specialist for Blowing Rock.

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The first place team normally represents Watauga County Schools in regional competition. However, a long standing field trip commitment will keep the Hardin Park Gold from attending the regional competition in Hickory in April and the Bethel Blue Team will attend in their place.

A total of 15 teams participated in the elementary grades Battle of the Books. Each team plays every other team once in the competition and each round consists of 12 questions posed to each team. The questions ask students to identify "in which book" a specific scene, event, or character appears. If a team provides the correct title and author of the book, they are awarded three points. If they miss, the other team has one chance to answer the question and can win two points for a correct response. The winning team is determined on the basis of total points scored in all rounds combined.

The Battle of the Books requires a team effort in the schools and broad community support, all of which is coordinated by Hardin Park Media Specialist Candice Trexler. She is assisted in her efforts by teachers and media specialists from the participating schools. She also relied on the assistance of about 35 volunteers, including parents, current and retired school system employees, personnel from ASU and the Watauga County Library, and others who help out as moderators, timekeepers, scorekeepers, and judges.

"We absolutely could not hold this competition without the help of our volunteers," Trexler said. "They are essential for Battle of the Books in Watauga County and we greatly appreciate the time and energy they contribute to these events."

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Trexler also thanked the Watauga Education Foundation and Mount Vernon Baptist Church for their support. The Watauga Education Foundation (WEF) provided a grant of \$2,000 that is crucial to paying for the program, and Mount Vernon Baptist Church generously donates the use of its classrooms and gym to host the competition. The WEF and Mount Vernon Baptist support the Battle of the Books competitions for both the elementary grades and for middle school students.

Trexler encouraged everyone to support the WEF through their major fundraising events, the Flapjack Flip, held in December each year, and the Shooting Stars student talent show, which will take place on May 9th in the Schaefer Performing Arts Center at ASU. "It's important to recognize the WEF for their support and I encourage you to attend their events. And if you've never been to Shooting Stars, you're really missing out. It's a fun-filled night and a great way to give back to a group that supports us."

Battle of the Books is a reading incentive program in which elementary grade teams read 18 carefully selected books in the weeks and months before the competition. Teams of three to six players participate in each round. While only one student is allowed to respond to each question, the team can discuss the response briefly before that student has to give the answer. Trexler praises the program for its value in encouraging students to read, saying that "Battle of the Books is an opportunity for students to participate in a fun, competitive atmosphere while enhancing their reading skills, enjoying quality literature, and being part of a team."

Persons or organizations interested in supporting Battle of the Books can contact Candice Trexler at Hardin Park School, 264-8481. Additional information about Battle of the Books is available online at www.ncslma.org/book-competitions.

The winning Hardin Park Gold Team for grades four and five includes (left to right) Lydia Rothrock, Ella Triplett, Makayla Barnes, Tucker Brown, Mason Stewart, and Ellery Rushing. At rear is their coach Emily Rothrock.

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Media Specialists Amy Hiatt and Candice Trexler tally scores for the elementary grades Battle of the Books.