

DESTINATION: REACHED

Mason Imaginator Team strives for first place at Globals



The Mason Imaginator Team at Globals in 2014, where they took home second place. Photo contributed by Sabrina Patel

Erin McElhenny | Staff Writer

Mason's Destination Imagination teams are destined for greatness.

Destination Imagination is a non-profit organization that prides itself on inspiring students to become the next generation of innovators and leaders. According to DestinationImagination.org, the program encourages students to have fun, take risks, incorporate the arts and incorporate STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) into their challenges. The program strives to teach the participants patience, flexibility, persistence, ethics, respect and problem-solving skills.

Out of all the Destination Imagination participants in Ohio, seniors Dillon Drozd and Sabrina Patel have been part of the organization the longest.

"I was in kindergarten and it was one of those flyers we took home," Drozd said. "My mom said to my dad, 'Why don't you do this? It seems like it'll be fun', and I've been doing it ever since. I think it's very beneficial because you're learning to work as a team, time management skills and how to collaborate, which you will need in life after high school."

Destination Imagination pro-

vides all the teams with challenges labeled A through F, and each challenge is geared toward a certain type of group. According to senior Sam Hodge, his group likes to take on the theatrical challenges.

"Our challenge was a C level challenge for Destination Imagination this year," Hodge said. "We had (to) come up with an eight-minute presentation of a character that deals with a phobia and show how they got the phobia and how they overcome it in that eight minutes. It's sort of like a play. We took the fear of music and incorporated it into a sequel of the story of the Pied Piper. The main character has to deal with a fear of music because the Pied Piper took his sister, so he goes on a quest to find his sister and overcome his fear along the way."

This team of Dillon and Sophie Drozd, Sam and Emma Hodge, Patel, Matthew Terry and Vinny Cevasco has been together for close to eight years. They've learned each other's strengths and weaknesses and are taking their efforts to Globals in May.

"In sixth grade, we made our team that we've had for eight years and we went to Globals and we placed in the top 10, which was an irreplaceable experience," Hodge said. "I think it created a bond between the seven of us

that cannot be broken. My hope for Globals this year is to win. We got our highest score at state this year; we're hoping we can go to Globals and get first place."

According to Patel, Destination Imagination has helped her find herself and what she loves to do.

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— SAM HODGE
SENIOR

"I've learned a lot of different skills I thought I would never be doing," Patel said. "I used to be very to myself and then I surprised everyone when I would be the one who, after we performed, would answer the judges' questions. I also learned a lot of skills; like working with power tools."

Patel said Destination Imagination has provided a way for her to interact with all types of people.

"At Globals, I learned to talk to people from other countries I never thought I'd meet in the near future," Patel said. "Learning about their story and how DI has impacted them is really cool."

LASTING LESSON

Holocaust survivor preaches forgiveness

Sonia Rayka | Staff Writer

On May 5, Mason High School students experienced a history lesson that went beyond the textbooks.

Holocaust survivor Eva Mozes Kor spoke at an assembly in front



Eva Mozes Kor

Photo by Sonia Rayka

of students and community members. At age six, Kor, her twin sister Miriam and her family were sent to Auschwitz where she and Miriam suffered through the twisted experiments of Josef Mengele, a Nazi doctor known for experimenting on twins. Kor said there was immense chaos the first day they arrived to Auschwitz.

"Everything was moving very fast," Kor said. "There was a lot of yelling and crying. I looked around and realized my father and two older sisters were gone. Never ever did I see them again...no longer did (Miriam and I) have any family and (we) had no idea what would become of us."

According to Kor, her ability to persevere through hardships she faced stemmed from the sight of three dead bodies in the camp, something she had never laid eyes on before.

"I've never seen anyone dead before, but it became clear to me that children would die so I made a silent pledge that I would do anything and everything within my power to make sure that Miriam and I would not end up on that floor, that we would actually survive," Kor said.

Since the liberation of Auschwitz camp, Kor has become a public speaker dedicated to sharing her story and teach lessons she has learned as a Holocaust survivor, one of them being the importance of forgiveness. Kor said her views about forgiveness were dramatically altered after Miriam's death in 1993. Kor said that her first steps toward forgiveness began with a friend suggesting that she write a letter to Dr. Mengele and forgive him. According to Kor, the ability to prevail against her own ghosts of Auschwitz had far greater strength than Mengele's acts of violence.

"(Through forgiving), I had power over Mengele and I wasn't hurting anybody, and if I could forgive him, I decided to forgive everyone who has hurt me," Kor said. "I was no longer a victim of Auschwitz, nor was I a victim of my tragic past. I was free of Auschwitz."

According to Kor, the formula for violence starts with anger and must be stopped by spreading ideas of peace and forgiveness.

"Anger is a seed for war," Kor said. "People who are at peace with themselves and with the world could be called seeds for peace. Forgiveness is a seed for peace."