

GRANADA HILLS

CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

PRESS RELEASE

GRANADA HILLS CHARTER HIGH BRINGS HOME THE GOLD! WINS 4TH U.S. NATIONAL ACADEMIC DECATHLON

April 18, 2015, ANAHEIM, CA: Over 30,000 hours of studying paid off for Granada Hills Charter High School this weekend when its Academic Decathlon team felt the cool, clinking of golden medals around their necks at the U.S. National Academic Decathlon in Anaheim. Granada Hills Charter took the coveted national championship after a grueling three-day competition accruing 53,592 points out of a possible 60,000.

This victory marks Granada Charter's fourth win in five years. GHCHS holds the National



GHCHS's championship team displays gold banner

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Academic Championship title for 2011, 2012, 2013 and now 2015. Granada has swept City, State and Nationals four separate times.

More than thirty outstanding high school teams from the U.S. came to compete, and another dozen from as far away as China and Great Britain. Still, Granada Hills Charter dominated the event. GHCHS seniors Fernando Sanchez, Jasmin Kim and junior Tanthai Pongstien were top-scorers in the competition.

Despite garnering literally dozens of gold, silver and bronze medals for individual performance, it was landing the overall national champion which meant the most to Granada's close-knit team. Led by coaches Mathew Arnold, Jonathan Sturtevant and Rachael Phipps, eleven students of all ability levels united to bring home the hard-fought 2015 championship. The winners are:

Irene Lee, Peter Cho, Fernando Sanchez, Jenean Docter, Jasmin Kim, and Natalie Gonzalez (Class of 2015); Jorge Zepeda, Tanthai Pongstien, Joshua Lin and Jihee Han (Class 2016); and Aishah Mahmud (Class of 2017). Leading the team were outstanding Granada teachers and coaches: Mathew Arnold (English), Jonathan Sturtevant (Math) and Rachael Phipps (English). Members of the Granada team have already been accepted to some of the nation's top colleges and universities including Yale, Amherst and M.I.T.

Granada's Jenean Docter was named "Most Inspirational Team Member." Docter held on until the bitter end of Friday night's high-pressure "Super Quiz" competition even though she was suffering from food poisoning. Senior Fernando Sanchez medaled in every area of study with either a bronze, silver or gold medal.

The members of Granada Hills Charter's team competed with over 500 students from 50 states on ten events covering topics in Art,



Granada Hills Charter's team places first in the Super Quiz Relay on Friday

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Music, Social Science, Science, Economics, Language and Literature, and Mathematics. Each individual also writes essays and is interviewed by judges on prepared and off-the-cuff topics.

This concludes the rigorous Academic Decathlon season that began in June 2014. Mathew Arnold, an English teacher at GHCHS and Academic Decathlon coach, describes how the students balance studying and school: "Over the course of the year, students learn how to become more efficient. They learn how to handle multiple tasks simultaneously. In part, this stems from the nature of Academic Decathlon: they simply do not have time to procrastinate. Our students are committed and it shows." Half the 2015 champions will now head off for college. The remaining team members look forward to next year's competition that culminates with the USAD National Competition in Anchorage, Alaska on April 2016.

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About Granada Hills Charter High School: Granada Hills Charter High School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. As a fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,400 and an annual student wait list of almost 3,000. The School's student body is considered one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 2,200 students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 non-profit benefit corporation, the School's Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its \$42 million operating budget. In 2014, BusinessInsider.com and Niche recognized GHCHS as the #1 public high school in California and #10 public high school in the United States of America.

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