

David Zhu, Former MathEdge Student, placed ninth in 2013 National MathCounts competition

David Zhu, 14 a former MathEdge student who currently attends The Harker School in San Jose placed ninth in the national Mathcounts competition held in Washington D.C. May 10, 2013.

He represented California in the team competition along with three of his peers.

David noted the California consistently places high in the competition.

“It’s fun to solve math problems and it’s great to put that skill to use and be able to compete,” he said.

The chance to even go to the national competition to represent the state was something a few years in the making for David.

He said that in sixth grade he didn’t qualify for the competition but in seventh grade he qualified for the state competition and placed fifth. “It was sad because only the top four places in each state get to go to the national competition.”

He thought qualifying as an eight grader would be much easier, but he said that wasn’t the case. “I couldn’t count on the fact that people had graduated and there would just be space for me because the people around me were also improving,” he said.

David said that the summer after seventh grade was his most intensive preparation session. “I was fairly comfortable because I had practiced a lot,” he said.

He found that while practicing he would run out of time. In order to practice he would do problems from the previous year with a reduced time. “This would account for more difficult problems and the fact that I might react slower under pressure,” he said.

David and his team had to win the county chapter division held at San Jose State in February and then the state competition held at Stanford University in March. He placed first in the state in the March competition which secured him the spot in the national competition.

Along with the chance to compete David also won an all-expenses paid trip to DC to compete in the national competition.

David starts high school as a ninth grader at Harker next week. He said he sees a lot of competitions in his future. “I will continue to participate in them and there are many more team based competitions in high school,” he said.

He also said that although he’s just starting high school he plans to aim to get into the best college he can.

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In his free time David turns his interest to programming. He also loves playing tennis and basketball.

“It is always nice to solve problems,” he said. “Many of them have very elegant solutions,” he added.

David said he started training before he even knew what Mathcounts was. It was MathEdge that introduced him to Mathcounts problems and he credits much of his success to the center.

He started attending MathEdge from the time he was in third grade until sixth grade.

“At first I had no idea what I was being given,” David said.

He remembers getting the simplest Mathcounts problems in the fourth or fifth grade. He said he remembers solving them and having difficulties with the easier problems.

“If I hadn’t stayed at MathEdge and trained I wouldn’t have been able to do as well in the competition,” he said.

David said that MathEdge took him on his first major math competition the summer before sixth grade. “I was glad they gave me that opportunity before many of the regular competitions started.”

David said that before MathEdge math was just school work. “I never had a use for it but the program introduced me to new and interesting problems.”

He said that MathEdge differs from other programs. “It’s really nice that they take students at a very young age.”