Buchholz wins national math championship;
local student wins top individual prize

The Buchholz High School math team has earned its 12th national title in 13 years after winning the 2019 Mu Alpha Theta competition in Las Vegas, Nevada.

The team brought home a record-breaking 242 awards during the competition and swept all three divisions, which include Mu (Calculus), Alpha (Pre-Calculus) and Theta (Algebra 2/Geometry)

Based on BHS' performance in both individual and team categories, the school earned 7672 points, outscoring its main rival American Heritage School by nearly 500 points. American Heritage is the only school to beat Buchholz for the national title in the last 13 years.

Buchholz took a larger number of competitors this year, with 61 students making the trip compared to 40 to 45 in previous years. Those students won a total of 25 first place trophies during the event.

Among those students was senior Yared Tadesse. He took first place in the History of Math category, but also won the Kalin Award, which is the most prestigious award for an individual student competitor. The award is based on both excellence in math achievement and service to Mu Alpha Theta. Among other requirements, nominees were interviewed by the organization's governing board, including educators from the high school and college levels and representatives from national mathematical organizations. The Kalin Award includes a $4000 prize and a $1000 grant for the winner's home school.

Tadesse says that he considered himself an average math student until he joined the BHS team, which motivated him to work harder on honing his skills.

"Initially it was about competing, I just wanted to just beat other people," he said. "But then the team becomes more of a family to you, and you want to work harder and nurture your ability not just for yourself, but for your peers."

Besides being a successful competitor, he's been active in a variety of service projects. This summer, for example, he's tutoring elementary and middle school students during the team's annual math camp. He says he wants them to experience the same thrill he got from the study of math.

 "I remember when I learned something knew or interesting, I would feel this 'click,'" he said. "That click was really addicting, and when you share it with someone else, it feels just as good."

"He is a special kid and an incredible representative of our school and our district," said BHS math team sponsor and coach Will Frazer.

Tadesse is headed to Cornell University this fall, where he plans to study statistics.

(more)

BHS's first place award winners in this year's national competition include:

History of Math-Yared Tadesse
Alpha Analytic Geometry-Jeremy Griffin
Alpha Trigonometry-Jake Frazer
Alpha Matrcies and Vectors-Sean Han
Theta Circles-Samuel Kim
Theta Area and Volume-James Hsu
Alpha Individual-John Sin
Theta Individual-Samuel Kim
Speed Math-Andy Wu
Relay-Buchholz Team: (Jeffrey Lu, Jeremy Griffin, and Samuel Kim)
Mu Integration-Jeffrey Lu
Alpha Applications-Jeremy Griffin
Alpha Equations and Inequalities-Coley Privette
Alpha Combinations and Probability-Jake Frazer
Theta Applications-Samuel Kim
Theta Combinations and Probability-Erick Jiang
Theta Equations and Inequalities-James Hsu
Alpha Ciphering-Jake Frazer
Theta Ciphering-Erick Jiang
Number Theory-Jeffrey Lu
Alpha Logs and Exponents-Jeffrey Xue
Alpha Complex Numbers-Sean Han
Theta Conics and Analytic Geometry-Samuel Kim
Theta Logs and Exponents-Kevin He
Theta Sequence and Series-Erick Jiang

For the first time ever, Gainesville High School also sent a team to the national competition this year. With a total of just 14 competitors, GHS still took 13th place among the 55 teams that competed from across the country, bringing home about 40 individual and team awards.

####