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Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics

Publicity Contact:

Brenda Davis

630-640-0004

Brenda.Davis@dupageact-so.org

DuPage County ACT-SO Students First in the Country at the National ACT-SO Competition in San Antonio, Texas

(Naperville, IL) – Students from the DuPage County ACT-SO program led the nation in medals at the 40th Annual National NAACP ACT-SO Awards Ceremony that was held in San Antonio, Texas. The students won the following medals:

- The gold medals in the Architecture, Computer Science, Mathematics, Music Composition and Physics categories.
- The silver medals in Medicine & Health and Biology.
- The bronze medals in Chemistry and Entrepreneurship.

The medalists will each receive cash prizes ranging from \$1,000-\$2,000 and were given an Apple iPad at the awards reception. The listing of all of the national medalists is found below.

“The National ACT-SO competition was the most amazing program I have ever attended!” said Michael Childress, president of the DuPage County NAACP branch. “When you combine talent, drive and tremendous branch and state leadership with the best mentors in the United States, you get the premier ACT-SO program in the country. I am so humbled to be associated with these future doctors, architects, scientists and entrepreneurs. Congratulations to all of our competitors and I look forward to another successful competition in 2019!”

The medalists were part of a group of 17 area high school students that won local gold medals at the DuPage County ACT-SO local competition that was held in March. The students vied for honors against more than 700 other local gold medalists from around the country at the National ACT-SO competition. The awards ceremony was hosted by DeRon Horton, star in the movie *DIRT*, and Netflix series *Dear White People*. ACT-SO alumni and actor Anthony Anderson from the award-winning television show *Blackish* stopped by the national awards ceremony and gave encouraging words to all of the participants to follow their dreams. DuPage County ACT-SO chapter participants from Will, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Cook counties marched into the awards ceremony along with their program leaders: Chairperson, Dorletta Flucas Payton, and Co-Chairperson, Thomas Reed, to chants of “Du-Du, DuPage” and cheers from the crowd and supporters.

ACT-SO (Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics), is a year-long program that was created to encourage high academic and cultural achievement among high school students of African descent. The primary focus of the program is the development of projects for competition in categories in the areas of STEM, Business, Humanities, Performing Arts and Visual Arts. Mentoring and academic enrichment are key objectives in this endeavor.

The program owes much of its success as the leading ACT-SO STEM program in the nation to its relationship with Argonne National Laboratory. This is the fourth year that Argonne and DuPage County ACT-SO have partnered for the Argonne/ACT-SO STEM Mentoring and Research Program. Each high school ACT-SO STEM student is paired with a scientist from Argonne National Laboratory in Darien. Argonne and the mentor provide guidance, resources and facilities for the students’ research. In addition to one-on-one mentoring, the program



brings in professionals every month to expose the students to careers in various STEM areas.

Middle and high school students who want to participate in DuPage County ACT-SO's academic year program should attend one of the orientation sessions; the first one will be at 3 p.m. on Saturday, August 25th, at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn. The information flyer is available on the program's website: www.dupageact-so.org.

DuPage County ACT-SO is a program of the DuPage County Branch of the NAACP. Since its 1979 inception, the local program has partnered with the College of DuPage. Key sponsors and partners of the program include Argonne National Laboratory, Glenbard High School District 87, Glenbard South High School and Comcast.

DuPage County ACT-SO 2018 National Award Winners

Category	Medal	Name	School	Grade
Architecture	Gold	Jasmine Walker	Neuqua Valley High School	12th
Computer Science	Gold	Nneka Onwuta	St. Charles East High School	12th
Mathematics	Gold	Erik Imathiu-Jones	Providence St. Mel School	11th
Music Composition	Gold	Myles Henderson	Downers Grove South High School	12th
Physics	Gold	Erik Imathiu-Jones	Providence St. Mel School	11th
Biology/Microbiology	Silver	Ethan Covington	Neuqua Valley High School	9th
Medicine and Health	Silver	Allyson Amegashie	Neuqua Valley High School	11th
Chemistry/Biochemistry	Bronze	Bryson Rivers	Bolingbrook High School	11th
Entrepreneurship	Bronze	Imani Porter	Neuqua Valley High School	11th

More About the ACT-SO Program

The Afro-Academics, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) is a major youth initiative of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Founded in 1978, by the renowned author and journalist, Vernon Jarrett, ACT-SO provides a forum through which African American youth demonstrate academic, artistic, and scientific prowess and expertise, thereby gaining the same recognition often reserved for entertainers and athletes. The objective of ACT-SO is to prepare, recognize and reward African-American youth who exemplify scholastic and artistic excellence.

NAACP branches and youth units throughout the country conduct annual competitions for students in grades 9 - 12. Gold medalists from the local competitions then compete against gold medalists from other cities around the nation at the National ACT-SO Competition that is held during the NAACP's Annual Convention in July.

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Photos From the National ACT-SO Competition

Photo Credit: Thomas Reed



Left to Right: Dorletta Flucas Payton, Ethan Covington, Nneka Omwuta, Jasmine Walker, Erik Imathiu-Jones, Bryson Rivers, Myles Henderson, Imani Porter, Allyson Amegashie and Thomas Reed.



2018 DuPage County ACT-SO Gold Medalists after the National Awards Ceremony.



Anthony Anderson giving remarks at the National ACT-SO Awards Ceremony.

