

Lake Oswego
 **Review**

Not just playing video games — designing them

Waluga takes Video Game State Championship

The Lake Oswego Review, May 26, 2010, Updated May 26, 2010



Submitted photo

Standing Left-to-Right: Sean Kelly, Nathan O'Neill, Vincent Chia
Sitting Left-to-Right : James Wells, Aaron Freyer, Andrew Liu

The Waluga JH video game development team, known as S.A.V.E. (Super Awesome Videogame Engineers) took the Oregon State Championship Award for the middle school division on May 1 at the Oregon Game Project Challenge (OGPC) tournament held at Chemeketa Community College in Salem.

Teams of four to seven middle or high school students took the opportunity to create computer video games specifically designed to be fun, challenging and innovative. This year 46 teams from around Oregon and Washington competed. The game challenge this year was Health & Wellness, and the S.A.V.E. team developed their game project around disease awareness, prevention, and treatment of malaria.

Malaria kills one to two million people per year. A child dies every 30 seconds from malaria, and the disease, which is as old as mankind itself, and has killed half the population of all people that have ever lived on Earth.

In their game named, Malaria Warfare, they built-in a large malaria awareness educational component with Web links to many renowned organizations such as Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mercy Corps, and the Red Cross. This area of the game is additionally filled with many disturbing facts about how malaria has impacted humanity yesterday and today.

The team plans to publically release their video game concept and hope that the engaging and fun game play will do much to further raise awareness and encourage greater volunteer and funding efforts to bring this world scourge under control, perhaps even eradicated.

In the game play, the player first arrives in a rural African village, and must apply malaria disease prevention techniques to protect the villagers from being infected. The player administers bed nets, drains stagnant water, applies specialized spraying, and so on, to protect the villagers and prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

However if a villager gets infected, they flash red, and must be immediately administered medication that injects the player realistically inside the human host, to fight the malaria parasite inside the liver and blood stages of the disease.

When the infected host is cured the player is returned to the village. Time is of the essence, as the host may die if the disease is allowed to overwhelm the body.

The S.A.V.E. team took it upon themselves to also make community service a priority. They planned and organized a video game development showcase held at River Grove Elementary. There they taught about 40 children how they can learn to program their own video games.

The OGPC Champion Award is the most prestigious award that any team can win. It celebrates the ultimate success of the OGPC mission. To be considered for the OGPC Champion award, teams must perform well in both technical and team performance categories, which include game research and development, game experience, programming, teamwork, and presentation.

The S.A.V.E. team members are: Vincent Chia, Aaron Freyer, Sean Kelly, Andrew Liu, Nathan O'Neill, and James Wells. The team coach is Bryan Kelly.

The team acknowledges and thanks the Veterans Medical Malaria Drug Discovery Laboratory, Oregon Translational Research and Drug Development Institute (OTRADI), and Drew Berry and the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research for their collaboration.

Please visit the team's website for more information: http://www.savegamedev.com/Community_Sharing.html .

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