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## Creative thinkers walk away world champs

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They may not have taken first place, but last weekend two Miami-Dade Odyssey of the Mind teams walked away from the World Championships in Maryland feeling like winners.

The team from Palmetto Elementary in Pinecrest, made up of fourth- and fifth-graders, tied with a team from Greenwich, Conn., for fifth place in the “Extreme Mousemobiles” problem, after competing against about 50 other teams from around the world.

The team from David Lawrence K-8 Center in North Miami, made up of middle-schoolers, tied with a team from Norwalk, Conn., for thirteenth place out of 62 teams for the “Full Circle” problem.

But for the David Lawrence team, the weekend was about more than just the competition.

“It was the most supportive competition I’ve ever seen,” said Karen DeLeon, whose daughter Lauren is an eighth-grader on the David Lawrence team.

“There was amazing interaction between kids from all ages from around the world. It was like there were no boundaries, there was no competitive spirit. It was like, let’s all do our best and support each other.”

DeLeon said the highlights of the trip for the David Lawrence students were taking the Metro into Washington, D.C., staying in college dorm rooms at the University of Maryland and playing volleyball with kids from Germany, Mexico and Maine.

Teams from the United States and 25 other countries participated in the Odyssey of the Mind World Championships over Memorial Day weekend. Odyssey of the Mind is an after-school educational program that focuses on creative problem solving. Teams at the elementary, middle, high school and college levels work on a problem throughout the school year and present their solution at the regional, state and world levels.

This year, the Palmetto Elementary and the David Lawrence teams were the only two from Miami-Dade to make it to the World Championships.