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PRESS RELEASE

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First place team: Palm Valley School

Team members from left to right: Jake Sonderman, Sara Habibipour,
Coach Andrea Coffey, Elizabeth Shay, Evan Spry

Coachella Valley high school students battled for scholarships in 16th annual Academic WorldQuest competition

PALM DESERT, Calif. – Palm Valley School in Rancho Mirage took first place from a field of eight Coachella Valley high schools during the 16th annual Academic WorldQuest competition held virtually on March 4. Team members included Jake Sonderman, Sara Habibipour, Elizabeth Shay, Evan Spry and Coach Andrea Coffey.

The competition is usually hosted by Cal State San Bernardino's Palm Desert Campus in the Indian Wells Theater, but arrangements were made to hold WorldQuest virtually this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was hosted and coordinated by Michael Karp, an assistant professor of history at the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus.

Palm Desert High School captured second place and Desert Hot Springs High School took third. The Palm Desert High School team included team members Britney Baez, Jennifer DeLeon, Shafaa Munjal and Joseph Lehman. Desert Hot Springs High School team members included Rene Liera, Fernando Cortez Osuna, Dominic Sanchez and Elijah Christy.

After eight individual rounds and three hours of competing, Palm Valley School took first place with a score of 65 out of 80. The team will move on, along with Palm Desert High School and Desert Hot Springs High School,

to compete against other high school teams throughout the country in the virtual National Academic WorldQuest Competition on April 17.

Scholarships were awarded to each student in the top three teams: first place, \$300; second place, \$200; and third place, \$100. The most improved award went to Shadow Hills High School whose team members won \$75 each.

Sponsored by World Affairs Council of the Desert, the Academic WorldQuest is a team game that challenges the competitors' knowledge of world affairs. The topics this year included Global Protests, Shifting Sands: The Arab Spring 10 Years-On, U.S. Foreign Service in the 21st Century, Great Decisions, Exploring Peace in a World of Conflict, Fraying Alliances, Looking to a Post-Pandemic Economy, and Current Events.

This year's competing high schools also included Coachella Valley High School, La Quinta High School, Rancho Mirage High School and West Shores High School. Certificates of recognition were mailed to all teams by World Affairs Council of the Desert.

The competition began with a thank you to the event sponsors from Jim McFarlin, president of World Affairs Council of the Desert; an introduction of the coaches and teams; and a welcome from the competition host Michael Karp.

Yul Roe chaired the event, and was assisted by Kimberly Burge, Lisa Corbin, Blair Karp, Gordon Kramer, Charles Porter, Priscilla Porter and Karen Speros. John Westerholm of the World Affairs Council of the Desert helped with score compiling.

Event sponsors included Inland Empire Community Foundation and Charles and Priscilla Porter as platinum sponsors; Anderson Children's Foundation and Thunderbird Country Club as gold ambassador sponsors; and the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, Chandi Group USA, College of the Desert, County of Riverside, Kim Smith, Thomas Flanagan, Jim Bruner, Pat Lizza and UBS Financial Services, Inc. as silver ambassador sponsors.

For more information about the Academic WorldQuest, visit the World Affairs Council of the Desert website at <https://www.worldaffairsdesert.org/worldquest>.

The CSUSB Palm Desert Campus offers bachelor's and master's degrees, a doctorate in educational leadership, and teaching credentials and certificates. With more than 1,600 students, it is the Coachella Valley's four-year public university and plays a vital role in educating and training the region's growing population.

For more information about the CSUSB Palm Desert Campus, contact Mike Singer in the Office of Strategic Communication at msinger@csusb.edu or (760) 341-2883, ext. 78107, or visit the campus website at www.csusb.edu/pdc.