



Preparing skillful, team-playing, out-of-the-box thinkers!

Navigating the Distance Learning Odyssey!

By Kim Kempton

Since March, when the State of CT closed our schools in response to COVID-19, we have all experienced varied levels of excitement and frustration with distance learning and the associated challenges. As districts across the state begin forming taskforces and developing back-to-school plans, I encourage you to give Odyssey of the Mind a fresh look. Whether your child has participated for years, was new this past year or recently took a break, Odyssey offers a unique enrichment opportunity that complements our “new normal.”

Teaches 21st Century Skills

Odyssey of the Mind is an interactive learning experience that fosters creativity, builds self-confidence and develops 21st Century skills, including communications, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. Its team-based approach encourages lasting friendships, too.

Supports Common Core Standards

The CTOM program aligns with the Connecticut College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for K-12 in reading, writing, speaking and learning, including:

- Key Ideas and details
- Craft and Structure
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas
- Range of reading and Level of text Complexity

- Production and distribution of Writing
- Research to Build and Present Knowledge
- Comprehension and Collaboration
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

In addition, the program can be used to create a hybrid learning environment in support of Connecticut Standards for Mathematical Practice, including:

- Model with mathematics
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others

Complies with Social Distancing

OM teams can be formed and develop solutions in compliance with various levels of social distancing guidelines. Its small group nature (up to 7 students per team) and focus on “no outside assistance” makes Odyssey the ideal enrichment activity for the 2020-21 school year. Meetings can be held in-person or on a digital platform.

Engage Your Child

Whether you are looking for a way to supplement your child’s school curriculum or have embraced home schooling, Odyssey presents a unique opportunity to make your learning experience more engaging, hands-on and team driven. For more information visit www.ctom.org or contact the CTOM’s Coaches’ Coach, Kim Kempton at kkempton@ctom.org.

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CTOM is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to Odyssey of the Mind in CT

Please visit our website at www.ctom.org



Could I Be a Coach?

Yes, you can!

Volunteer coaches are the foundation of the Odyssey program. Anyone... a parent, teacher, grandparent, or neighbor can coach an Odyssey team. There is no experience required, just an open-minded approach to creativity and teamwork. Coaching is rewarding and fun!

Coaches generally meet weekly with teams of up to seven students to supervise them and stimulate, rather than influence, their thinking. No "outside assistance" is allowed as the team works together to solve its chosen problem. Team meetings can be conducted in person or via video conference, or a combination!

You won't be alone.

CTOM will be providing coaches with in-person and virtual support and training throughout the year.

In November, we offer Odyssey Day, a skills-training day for kids and coaches, with topics such as balsa-wood building, improvising, script writing, making things work, and converting junk to treasure. Our website, www.ctom.org, and the national website, www.odysseyofthemind.com are loaded with hints and resources.

You will be a role model.

A strong team is grounded in a strong coach. You can be a great coach by simply modeling good behavior for your team members. Always encourage respect, understanding and compassion. At the conclusion of each meeting, lead the team through a brief evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses:

- What issues did you encounter today?
- What came easily for each team member?
- What did you do well?
- Where could you improve?
- Is there a skill or concept that the team needs to review / learn?

At the end of each meeting, recognize



individual efforts and celebrate the team for meeting short-term goals.

You will be fostering CREATIVITY!!!

Odyssey is about accommodating absurdity, and strangeness and newness... it is about breeding genius. Above all else, Odyssey is a creativity program. That's what it's all about. Thinking methodically, (yes there's an engineering process and a plan for writing a script for a reason), but also thinking a little bit crazy and searching for that out-of-the-box solution, in every situation. Think of Odyssey as a team sport that targets makers, doers, thinkers, and tinkerers! Coaching is an adventure, where the reward is creative kids!

What is the Anderson Award??

For many years, the CTOM Board of Directors has been pleased to offer a handful of new memberships initial funding under its [Jon and Claudia Anderson Initiative Award](#) program. The purpose of the award is to increase opportunities for children of all socio-economic backgrounds to engage in our creative problem-solving activities. While priority is given to teams from urban or at-risk settings, all teams are encouraged to apply. Named to honor former long-time Board members and Spontaneous Problem Captains, the Award provides:

- The national membership fee (currently \$135)
- The CTOM tournament registration fee for up to four teams associated with the membership (currently \$225 per team)
- A stipend for the coach or site coordinator, in the amount of \$125 per team, for up to four teams associated with the membership.

Any entity that is qualified under the national rules to sponsor an Odyssey of the Mind team may apply, provided the entity has not had an active membership in the last three years.

Applying for this generous award is easy!

By December 1st, submit a short letter to AssnDir@ctom.org that verifies a new membership and outlines how the new membership/teams formed and any information that supports your application. Also, provide a brief letter of support from the principal or head of the sponsoring organization verifying their willingness to encourage the new membership and naming a coordinator. You will be notified of CTOM's decision by December 15th.

While the award is for one year, recipients are welcome to apply for a second (final) year of funding. We want every student, regardless of financial need, to be able to join us for an exhilarating journey into teamwork, spontaneity, and creative problem solving!

SPON Summer Fun!

By Rachel Cunningham

Spontaneous is coming!

We know your team misses CTOM, and we miss you too! CTOM is excited to announce that we are creating a virtual Summer Spontaneous Club! The CTOM Summer Spon Club will be modeled after a Spontaneous Club created by Board Member, Rachel Cunningham, at the elementary school where she teaches 1st grade. However, this time it will all be virtual!

Join CTOM Summer Spon Club

Brush up on your spontaneous skills and challenge friends and family to a friendly competition. CTOM will be posting new spontaneous challenges every week, **starting July 23rd through August 27th**. CTOM Summer Spon Club will be available on [Facebook](#), Twitter, and via email (simply opt-in by clicking [HERE](#) and completing the online form). Each weekly challenge will be posted on Thursdays, and solutions for that week's problem will be due the following Tuesday. Team members can share their solutions with the CTOM community by posting a photo within the comments section of each Facebook post.

Recognizing Creativity!

Unique and creative solutions will be shared with the CTOM community and celebrated with award certificates.

CTOM 2021 Tournament

Members of the CTOM Board, Problem Captains and a selection of former coaches have created a committee to look at a variety of issues concerning the 2021 competition year and associated CT state tournament. Over the coming weeks and months, the committee will be soliciting feedback from students, parents, teachers, school administrators and community members, while utilizing information provided by local and state governments and health professionals. The committee will be examining various options and considering implications for each proposal. This is a very complicated process and we ask all CTOM participants for their patience, support and feedback. OMers share a collaborative and creative spirit, and we are approaching this challenge with the same. Please be sure to check www.ctom.org and follow us on [Facebook!](#) While we anticipate numerous changes and adjustments will be made along the way, our goal is to develop a solution that creates a safe and effective opportunity for our OMers to share their creative solutions with one another, our judges, family and the larger community.

Spread the Word!

If you enjoy the CTOM Summer Spon Club, please invite others to join in the fun! You don't have to be an Omer or a member of CTOM to participate in our summer challenges. We also encourage your local school, as well as coaches and parents, to share our CTOM Summer Spon Club posts on Facebook.

Stay Engaged on Hot Summer Days!

This Spon Club is designed to keep teams engaged and excited for the upcoming CTOM year through the summer months! Our Summer Spon Club will be an excellent opportunity for team members to practice their Spon skills, without the pressure of a competition setting. This will also be an excellent opportunity for your child to exercise their brain after distance learning. We will also have modified Spon problems for primary aged students to complete. We are so excited for the CTOM Summer Spon Club, and we hope that you and your team will be, too! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Rachel Cunningham at rcunningham@ctom.org.

Dates, Details & The Drill

CTOM hosts a variety of events and training opportunities throughout the year. Events may be in-person and/or virtual, depending on circumstances. Specific details will be provided closer to each date. Participating in CTOM events helps to build skills, comradery and team dynamics.

Timeline:

August 2020

Long-Term Problems are released by CCI and team registration opens.

September 2020

Teams begin to form and start meeting.

October 2020

Coaches' Training A

November 2020

Odyssey Day (training and fun for students, parents and coaches)

December 2020

Coaching Spontaneous Training

January 2021

Coaches' Training B

Saturday, January 9, 2021

Tournament Registration deadline (Fee: \$225, after this date, a late fee of \$50 applies)

March 2021

Judge Training

Saturday, March 20, 2021

CT State Tournament

Have questions or want to learn more? Contact our Coaches' Coach, Kim Kempton at kkempton@ctom.org