

For Immediate Release

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Samohi Students Build and Race Solar Powered Boat in 2010 Solar Cup



Santa Monica High School students build the hull of their solar boat at Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Claremont, Nov 21, 2009.



Samohi students complete the hull.



Students test boat in Marina del Rey May 6, 2010.



Boat artwork, rudder, and drive shaft with propeller.



Boat artwork - "Poseidon" - by student Valerie Wacker.



Sophomore skipper Nhi Ho with Eileen Flores (deckhand) about to launch in the endurance race at Lake Skinner, Temecula Valley, May 15, 2010.



Co-coach Dr. Bob Kilroy oversees students tuning up the boat.



Senior skipper Eileen Flores competes in endurance race.



Junior skipper Mona Zibahalat docks after sprint race.



Students listen to race instructions on the dock.



Students and coaches with Metropolitan Water District Solar Cup sponsor.



Renee Klein (in paddock) and students collect an estimated 4,000 recyclables at the event to raise money for LifeStraws.



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This past weekend, Santa Monica High School students sponsored by the City of Santa Monica, competed for their second year in the Solar Cup, the nation's largest solar boat competition put on by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. 36 high schools teams built a 16' wooden hull, attended technical workshops at Occidental College, wrote engineering reports, produced a video about water conservation, prepared and presented a lesson plan on a water-related topic, and overcame the arduous tasks of purchasing materials under a restricted budget and outfitting their boats with solar, steering, electrical, and drive-train systems. Based at Lake Skinner in Temecula Valley, schools raced in two sprint and two endurance competitions. Samohi's solar boat team composed of ten Marine Biology and Team Marine students finished 11th overall, improving from last year's 16th place finish.

While the team experienced a few technical difficulties in the endurance races, co-coach and engineering guru, Dr. Bob Kilroy explained, "The cool thing about this year is that the students placed sixth in the sprint."

Returning solar boat student, senior Melanie Delia commented, "It's always a struggle to get everything done by the deadline, but this year it was easier for us. I am very pleased with how we did." Senior veteran Megan Kilroy added, "The best part of the cup was being able to teach the newcomers how to build the boat and give them advice on how to race it."

New to the team, senior skipper, Eileen Flores said, "The boat's success clearly reflects our hard work as a team. I loved racing it and I'd do it again in a heartbeat!"

The Solar Cup is a competition that gives high school students hands-on experiences in science, alternative energy, water conservation, engineering, budgeting, and creative multimedia. Co-coach and Marine Biology teacher Benjamin Kay explains, "There is no better way for students to internalize their learning than through projects like this, and we are so thankful to the city for their support." Kay and students are next working on converting a donated 1971 red convertible Volkswagen beetle into an all-electric freeway-worthy vehicle whose batteries will be powered by solar. More information is available at www.teammarine.org and www.teammarine.blogspot.com.

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