

Chesapeake Science student honored at White House Eighth-grader was among 24 from around the country who met Obama



Tristan Carmean (second row from the front on the right), a student at Chesapeake Science Point Charter School, was among 24 students honored at the White House by President Barack Obama. (Courtesy of Maryland Charter School / October 21, 2010)

Eighth-grader Tristan Carmean of Millersville has something in common with players from some of the nation's greatest sports teams who have visited the **White House** to be celebrated for their accomplishments.

But while the athletes were invited for their prowess on the playing field, Tristan, 12, a student at Chesapeake Science Point Charter School in Hanover, was honored for academics.

Tristan was one of two dozen students invited to participate in the White House Science Fair, after representing the U.S. in a global math competition. Much of the Oct. 18 event was held in the State Dining Room, though Tristan said they did not dine there. The students did, however, get a chance to meet **President Barack Obama**, who Tristan said shook his hand twice.

"He told me I did a good job," said Tristan about the president. During the ceremony, he stood behind Obama in the East Room, as the president lauded the students for achievements that rank right up there

with feats of college and pro athletes.

"We welcome championship sports teams to the White House to celebrate their victories. I've had the Lakers here. I've had the Saints here, the Crimson Tide. I thought we ought to do the same thing for the winners of science fair and robot contests, and math competitions because often we don't give these victories the attention that they deserve," Obama said in a prepared statement at the event.

Tristan said that before visiting the White House, some of his CSP classmates begged him to get the president's autograph. "Parents said it would be rude, so I didn't do that," he said.

Tristan said that one of the most memorable moments during the visit was viewing displays of science projects made by students from across the country.

"I thought it was pretty interesting. I saw a project where a few kids didn't have a lot of money so they held a fundraiser to make a special chair for a friend with a muscular disorder," he said. "There were robots that flipped over and other stuff that was cool."

CSP principal Fatih Kandil said that Tristan's honor is the result of a school that pushes its students toward international competitions, in part to see where they measure up among top-flight students.

He said that last year, Tristan was among 80 of the school's 198 students who participated in four global competitions geared toward science and math.

Kandil added that Tristan is taking such accelerated courses as Algebra 2 (equivalent to 11th-grade math for public schools) and biology (equivalent to ninth-grade honors biology) and that he will finish middle school with five high school credits.

"We want our students to compete with other countries and see where we are," said Kandil. "If you saw the movie 'Waiting For **Superman**,' you saw that nationally we're not there, but at CSP we're catching up."

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