

Students to Vie for Honors In DECA Marketing Event

Lake Orion High School will play host to the annual Michigan DECA District 7 marketing competition on Saturday, Jan. 12, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Julia Dalrymple, the school's DECA advisor, said the event is part of a larger competition that will see its conclusion in Grand Rapids in March.

DECA is a high school vocational organization established for students interested in pursuing a career in marketing and business, Dalrymple said. Students compete in an occupational area, such as advertising, restaurant marketing, apparel and accessories.

There will be 17 different high schools from Oakland and Macomb County participating in the Jan. 14 competition. The winners of that event will then go on to Grand Rapids in the spring to compete in the state finals event against students who won regional competitions in other parts of the state.

"The competition is broken down into two categories," Dalrymple said. "One is the leadership competition where students are given a role-playing situation. They have 10 minutes to prepare and can take as many notes as they want. Then they role-play in front of the judges who decide how well they did in solving the problem they were given."

The role-playing situations vary, Dalrymple said. Students might have to try to handle an angry customer, or come up with a campaign to sell something.

That's part one of the competition, Dalrymple said. Part two is a written test. The results of both parts are combined to determine the winners in each of the 30 categories. There will be 10 winners

in each category. Students are limited to competing in only a single one.

Dalrymple said she expects 580 students to participate in the Jan. 14 event.

Judges, Dalrymple said, are all volunteers.

"We find the judges from all over," Dalrymple said. "They are people we know, or are from local businesses. I like to say that anyone who wants a good free meal and wants to see some high school students do some amazing things can be a judge. They do a great job and I just want to thank them for being so generous with their time."

Dalrymple said that Lake Orion High School teaches marketing, and students from those classes are the ones who participate in DECA. The organization dates back to the 1940s, and its name once stood for Distributive Education Clubs of America, but there have been so many changes to the organization, which is national, that it's now just known as DECA.

Dalrymple teaches marketing at the high school, which is how she became chairwoman of the Jan. 14 competition.

"My role as the faculty advisor is to prepare our students for the competition, for DECA events and for life," Dalrymple said. "I like to say my job entails a little bit of everything."

She thanked Genysis Credit Union, headquartered in Auburn Hills, for being the main sponsor of the 2013 event. She added that thanks should be given to two local restaurants that are feeding those attending. The Italian Gardens in Oxford is feeding the adults, and the students are being fed by Jet's Pizza.

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