We Invite

to Run

The Other Great Chicago Marathon

THE MARATHON FOR THE MIND™

Illinois Academic Decathlon Association
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ILLINOIS ACADEMIC DECATHLON ASSOCIATION

An affiliate of the U.S. Academic Decathlon

The Illinois Academic Decathlon (ILAD) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to conduct fair and challenging ten-event academic competitions for high school students throughout the state.

We firmly believe that every child's learning potential can be maximized through competitive challenge.

ILAD's ***Marathon for the Mind*** encourages and supports academic excellence in average, as well as honor students, and desires to provide as much reward and recognition to scholars as is given to prep athletes.

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Since becoming an affiliate of the United States Academic Decathlon Association in 1990, ILAD has conducted annual scholastic competitions for students in grades 9-12 and has trained their coaches. The academic decathlon program emphasizes high achievement, intellectual growth, teamwork, critical thinking, oral and written communication, and the development of future leaders. Students compete in annual scholastic competitions that require proficiency in ten subject areas: mathematics, science, social science, economics, language and literature, fine arts, speech, interview, and essay writing. One of the highlights of the competition is the Super Quiz, which is designed as a game show and attracts large audiences and major broadcast and print media coverage.

The Decathlon's unique academic competition does not single out the best students in each school, but summons the best in each student in every school. Each nine-member team includes three C-average students, three B-average students and three A-average students. By design, one third of the decathletes have grade point averages of 2.0 or below.

Although only 27% of Illinois' population is African American and Latino, nearly 87% of Illinois' decathletes are from these ethnic groups because of the overwhelming participation of Chicago Public Schools (CPS). CPS students comprise 83% of our decathletes.

Many students who perform poorly in their classrooms actually excel in scholastic competitions. Illinois' 2003 state championship academic decathlon team is a classic example of this phenomenon. This Chicago Public Schools team won the Gold Medal in its division at the national Academic Decathlon competition. Three of its team members had cumulative grade point averages of 1.0 (D) on their regular class work; however, they outperformed in a competitive setting. One of the three performed so well that he won a scholarship at the national decathlon competition.

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ILAD recently won the bid to host the nation's most prestigious academic competition in Chicago: the United States Academic Decathlon. Hosting the competition here offers a tremendous opportunity for the city of Chicago and the state of Illinois to showcase the excellent students, teachers and school districts we have throughout the state. It also provides an opportunity for LaSalle Bank to demonstratively support academic excellence and strengthen its brand among consumers throughout the country.

Several corporate, educational, and community service organizations have partnered with ILAD to support the organization's goals and objectives. Without these active partners and their priceless contributions, the Illinois Academic Decathlon program would have a limited chance of success:

- **Governor Rod Blagojevich** and **Mayor Richard M. Daley** are co-chairing a blue ribbon committee that includes **Chicago Public Schools CEO Arne Duncan** and other Illinois corporate executives to raise funds to support the national academic decathlon competition to be held in Chicago in April 2005.
- **Motorola Corporation,** a previous state competition sponsor, has a director's seat on our board, recruits volunteers to judge the interview competition, and awards scholarships to several decathletes each year.
- **WGN Children's Charities**, the current competition sponsor, also provides funding to support the organization's activities and operations.
- The **U. S. Department of Energy** and **Argonne National Laboratory** are strong supporters of academic excellence and the ILAD mission and may host the state competition in 2004.
- The **Chicago Public Schools** is major sponsor, an active partner, and holds a seat on our board; CPS' Department of High School Programs also has a staff manager for the Academic Decathlon program.
- The **City Colleges of Chicago** makes yearly in-kind contributions, including office space. A CCC vice president sits on the ILAD board of directors.

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Why Business Supports ILAD

- 70% of U.S. employees are not college graduates, which places the burden on our high schools to provide a pool of graduates that perform well in high performance workplaces and help businesses remain competitive in a global marketplace.
- Academic Decathletes learn teamwork and creative problem solving.
- Academic Decathletes become proficient in ten academic areas, enhance their oral and written communication skills and build self-confidence.
- Academic Decathletes are more likely to complete college.

"I was able to get a head start on college and communicate effectively and intelligently with the professional community. The Academic Decathlon provided me with so much!"

- Today's Academic Decathletes grow up to be tomorrow's business leaders.
- Repeatedly, average students who become Academic Decathletes discover that, with hard work, they can achieve at the level of honor students.
- "C" students who become Academic Decathletes are inspired to work harder in school and to become more successful in life.
- Academic Decathletes are respected and celebrated in their schools for their scholastic achievements, as are the athletes.

"AcaDec was the best preparation for college. It really taught me how to study and how to be self-disciplined."