



For Immediate Release

The National Museum of Mathematics, the Only Math Museum in North America, Announces 9th Anniversary Winners of the 2021 *Rosenthal Prize for Innovation and Inspiration in Math Teaching*

MoMath's free public archive with all the innovative Rosenthal prize-winning lesson plans is available as a resource for teachers striving to engage students during pandemic

Since 2012, MoMath has awarded more than \$330,000 to math educators worldwide for creative, hands-on math teaching in upper elementary and middle school

New York, NY (January 6, 2022)—The [National Museum of Mathematics](#) (MoMath), the only Math Museum in North America, has named the winners of the 2021 *Rosenthal Prize for Innovation and Inspiration in Math Teaching*, an annual award that recognizes and promotes hands-on math teaching in upper elementary and middle school classrooms.

Each educator will be awarded a monetary prize, as well as be featured in MoMath's [free online archive](#) of *Rosenthal Prize*-winning instructional activities dating back almost ten years. This educational resource is aimed at providing teachers with a library of

outstanding, wide-ranging, interactive lesson plans that can help bolster classroom creativity and student engagement, in particular during the ongoing pandemic.

The 2021 *Rosenthal Prize for Innovation and Inspiration in Math Teaching* winners are:

- **First place:** Chaim Goodman-Strauss, professor of mathematics at the University of Arkansas created the winning activity and was awarded a \$25,000 cash prize. His lesson on symmetry, "Tooti Tooti (2222)," was chosen from more than 100 submissions worldwide.
- **Second place:** David Caliri, Lead Engineer and Product Designer for Learning Beautiful, a Boston-based organization, was awarded \$10,000 for "Binary Coins Are Better Than Bitcoin!," a lesson on binary numbers.
- **Third place:** Elena Pavelescu, University of South Alabama Associate Professor in the Mathematics and Statistics Department, was awarded \$2,500 for "The Game of Cats: A Mathematical Logic Activity."
- **Honorable mention:** Ryan Smith, a STEM teacher at The Greene School in West Palm Beach, FL, was awarded \$500 for his lesson on converting measurement units, "Astronaut Explorer: A Measurement Conversion Conundrum."

"Each year, MoMath's *Rosenthal Prize* competition recognizes some of the most innovative math educators from around the world. Never has the need to celebrate educators been more important than during the ongoing pandemic, which has created so many challenges for students, families, and teachers," said Cindy Lawrence, CEO and Executive Director of MoMath. "We hope that these compelling, creative lesson plans, which the Museum makes available as part of a free online resource, will help educators engage students with the joy and beauty of math, whether remotely or in person."

MoMath's virtual archive contains a wide range of classroom lessons, such as math probability activities, exploration of the math of fashion design, and an investigation of projections using light and shadows, contributed by educators from across North America including New Jersey, Massachusetts, Georgia, California, Wisconsin, Montana, and Saskatchewan, Canada.

This year's first place winner, Chaim Goodman-Strauss, hails from Fayetteville, AR. His winning lesson, "Tooti Tooti (2222)," teaches students about symmetry by creating "tiles" with four different points of two-fold rotational symmetry (i.e., the patterns remain the same as you rotate them 180 degrees) and piecing the tiles together into patterns that can fill an infinite space, similar to wallpaper patterns.

David Caliri, who currently lives in Tbilisi, Georgia, and works for a Boston-based organization that grew out of the MIT Media Lab, was awarded second place for his lesson, "Binary Coins Are Better Than Bitcoin!" His lesson allows students to learn about the binary number system in a tangible and interactive way by participating in an activity where they pretend to be business owners and create their own currency to make exact change for product sales.

Third place winner Elena Pavelescu of Mobile, AL, was recognized for her lesson "The Game of Cats: A Mathematical Logic Activity," which teaches students logic by asking them to interpret "and" and "or" statements.

Ryan Smith of Lake Worth, FL, received an honorable mention for his lesson, "Astronaut Explorer: A Measurement Conversion Conundrum," which allows students to take on the role of astronauts exploring a new planet on which they must learn about the civilization's measurement system. This activity promotes genuine thinking, decoding, and reasoning, and is designed to help students construct procedures for converting from one unit to another using ratios and unit conversions.

Since it was established in 2012, MoMath's *Rosenthal Prize* has given cash awards to 27 individuals, totaling more than \$330,000. The award is named for Saul Rosenthal, President of Oxford Funds, LLC, Trustee of the National Museum of Mathematics, and a longtime supporter of math education.

"I am thrilled to once again recognize the most exceptional educators from around the world who are helping students see math in a new way," said Saul Rosenthal. "My hope is that these award-winning activities will positively impact math education by encouraging innovation and incorporation of hands-on methods in classrooms globally."

More information about submitting applications for the 2022 *Rosenthal Prize for Innovation and Inspiration in Math Teaching* and the full archive of past winners' lesson plans can be found at rosenthal.momath.org.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MATHEMATICS

MoMath, the only math museum in North America, is located at 11 East 26th Street on the northside of Madison Square Park in Manhattan. When mandated by New York City to close in March 2020 because of the Covid-19 crisis, MoMath transformed itself into a virtual Museum with a global footprint. During the pandemic, MoMath has provided more than 1,500 online programs reaching more than 60,000 participants from all 50 U.S. States and Territories, as well as more than 100 countries, including Australia, Vietnam, Guatemala, Egypt, Argentina, Indonesia, China, Pakistan, Bhutan, Sweden, Chad, Zambia, and France. With its newfound global audience, MoMath is continuing to devote all its capacity and expertise to providing high quality, interactive, and responsive online education. For more information, visit momath.org

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