

Manxi (Maggie) Shi

San Jose, CA

BASIS Independent Silicon Valley (BISV)

Grade: Junior

Hobbies: painting, volleyball, reading, photography, biking, cooking, listening to music

Clubs: Physics Club, Math Club, Astrophysics Club, National Junior Classical League, Crystal Children's Choir, Volleyball Team

Experience: AIME (2021&2022), USAPhO (2022), NLE Silver (2022), HMMT, SMT, BMT, PUEC, Physics Bowl

Bio:

My curiosity for physics started with the frivolous questions I asked my dad as a child. "Why does my water bottle roll to the front of the car when you brake? How come I feel slightly smushed when we go up an elevator?" The summer before fifth grade, I attended a math summer camp at BISV, where my teacher Mr. Linhares would often go on tangents about astronomy while teaching us pre-algebra. These tidbits of information opened up a new, curious world of science that I was eager to explore.

The summer before freshman year, I was introduced to Physics Olympiad by an F=ma camp at AlphaStar. Those three weeks of classes and my wonderful teachers Anthony and Victor were transformative. I remember watching them debate a difficult problem on the whiteboard, not understanding a word of what they said but hoping one day, I would. After class, I spent hours at home reviewing notes and practice problems, growing more and more excited when every little lightbulb in my head went off. I left summer camp with a newfound love and appreciation for physics. I remember bringing the lecture notes to my uncle's wedding that summer, sitting on the couch, trying to understand angular momentum while the adults mingled.

Throughout my high school years, I diligently pored over Morin's blue book, Halliday and Resnick, and Kevin Zhou's handouts. Classes like Physics C, Linear Algebra, and Multivariable Calculus prepared me well for the more advanced physics I would encounter. After school, I enjoy Physics Club and Astrophysics Club where I can learn and teach with my friends, surrounded by peers with similar interests. When I'm not nerding out over physics, I enjoy singing with Crystal Children's Choir (this year we sang the national anthem at a Warriors game!), cooking and baking, painting, playing/coaching volleyball, listening to music, and vacationing (my favorite was either cliff jumping in Maui or skiing at Lake Tahoe).

This year, I was incredibly surprised to receive the email invitation from AAPT. Recounting my physics journey would not be complete without mentioning the sad, empty cartridges of printer ink because my dad insisted on printing out entire physics eBooks and slipping out in the middle of choir practice every week for physics class.

Thank you Dr. Noble for supporting my pursuits in physics and Dr. Huet for being such an inspiring teacher. I owe many thanks to my outside of school math and physics teachers: Dr. Yue, Dr. Tang, and Dr. Liu. Thank you to my family and friends for their endless love and support – to my dad, someone I can always discuss physics with; to my mom and little brother, my biggest cheerleaders. A few years ago, still learning basic mechanics at AlphaStar, I would have never expected to be here writing this today, but I am honored and grateful to have this opportunity to meet brilliant people and deepen my understanding of physics and the world around me.