

## News Release

Feb. 9, 2007

### DeKalb High School A Cappella Group is State Champ

If you ask the DeKalb High School boys a cappella group, "You've just won the State/Regional Championship, what are you going to do now?" they might answer, "We're going to Disney World!" That's because the group is headed to Disney World in May to compete in the National Championship of High School a Cappella.

On Feb. 17, DeKalb's boys a cappella group took first place at the Illinois State Championship High School A Cappella competition, sponsored by the National Championship of High School A Cappella and hosted by DeKalb High School. The competition actually went beyond state lines since schools from Missouri and Wisconsin also competed. The first place team from 2006, Parkway North Men's Room from St. Louis, Missouri, returned this year to place third. Burlington High School from Burlington, Wisconsin took second place.

The a cappella group is composed of 11 students: seniors Dan Larmon, Wes Nelsen, and Derick Peterson; juniors Ben Balika, Ian Cook, Zach Effler, and Jeff Miguel; sophomores Drew Taylor and Adam Welch; eighth grader Brett Balika; and seventh grader Harrison Hintzsche.

The boys performed three pieces: *It's Alright* by Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions, *Yellow* by Coldplay, and *Brown-Eyed Girl* by Van Morrison. Larmon, Nelsen, and Taylor sang solos, and Taylor and Hintzsche performed vocal percussion. Taylor received the award for outstanding vocal percussion in the competition.

The group meets after school for 4-8 hours a week. The boys a cappella group was formed four years ago by 2006 graduates Brian Balika, Nick Miguel, and Aaron Zepeda. "They perform music entirely a cappella - imitating instrumentation with their voices to adapt pieces to a cappella arrangements," said Choral Director Travis Erikson. "It tends to be very challenging to perform this style of music, and often the boys have to learn to sing music with very wide ranges. The students frequently arrange and transcribe popular music they enjoy. Nick Miguel transcribed the "Brown-eyed Girl" arrangement that was sung in the competition." Erikson said the music department is in the process of creating a girls a cappella group. They hope to be ready to perform later in the spring.

The DeKalb boys a cappella now advance to the National Championships at Disney World in Orlando, Florida on May 6-10. The DeKalb High School Music Department is seeking sponsors to help with the costs of the trip. For further information or to help, call DeKalb High School at 815-754-2100.