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## City of Marina/On the Beach/DRAWN Skate Team Returns After Winning 2011 Junior Olympic National Championship

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To the fanfare of proud friends and family, the City of Marina/On the Beach/DRAWN Skate Team returned from their competition in Encinitas, CA where they placed first in the 2011 Junior Olympic National Championship. Tuesday evening, at 6:30 PM, they were rushed from the Marina airport to the Teen Center on Hilcrest by both Fire Department and Police personnel. The young kids, ranging from 8-17 years old were met by throngs of jubilant supporters.

The two-time California State Champion skate team beat out at least 17 other state champion teams from around the country to receive the prestigious honor of being crowned "the best."

"The Marina Foundation has been working hard with the City of Marina and working to raise money to send these kids to these competitions throughout the year," said Steve Emerson, President of the Marina Foundation. "So we look forward to celebrating and having a good time tonight." Emerson was there early, relaying information to the gathering crowd that the boys were running behind. He took pictures after encouraging them into the front of the skate park for the arrival of their giant van, flanked in both the front and rear by patrol cars and fire engines. Mayor Bruce Delgado could hardly contain his pride for the boys, "anytime you have National Champions at anything, that's pretty special. But to have it be a group of young kids going around the state, and then beating other Champions from other states. And I suppose what's next is the potential to go to Italy for International competition. It's pretty awesome! For the first time, Monterey County has a team of National Champions!"

Surely the City of Marina has plenty to take pride in with these young men. Terry Siegrist, the Recreation and Cultural Services Director, sure was proud. "On Saturday, I probably saw the best skating that I've seen since we've been on the road. They knew what they were there to do, they took care of business and they represented this community with style. You would have been really proud of them down in Encinitas. They were commented on by everyone that was there." This skate team was started two and half years ago. "It's not the skating that I'm in it for. My thing is to take the board and wheels and use them as a vehicle for change. Every one of these guys has made major accomplishments, not only in what they've done on the skateboard but, more importantly, in what they've done in life." Many of the kids spent their summer vacations working in skate camps, raising money to compete in events such as these.

"They took their individuality and brought it together as a group," Siegrist continued, "this program that you see is a national model. This program does not exist anywhere else, we're creating it."

The kids were thrilled, a little tired, but energetic and high-spirited. Anthony Johnson, one the team's leaders stood before the crowd to speak on behalf of his teammates, all proudly displaying their medals. "Through the twists and turns and the ups and downs of our skate team, we came together and in 2011 came up and won. On behalf of the skate team, we would all like to thank the community and the City of Marina because without you guys we wouldn't be this far and we wouldn't have the stuff that we have."

Congratulations to the 15 Champions on perhaps the most successful and awe inspiring run of any start-up skate team. Their impressive achievements prove that good things can certainly come through dedication, hard-work and perseverance. As leaders looked onward and spoke of taking the team to the international level, the boys got to enjoy hot pizza and cold soda, as well as many other treats, compliments of the proud members of the Marina Community.



Terry Siegrist holds up the championship Banner during the reception



Alejandro Martinez proudly displays His medal following the ceremonies