

AN INTERNATIONAL WEEK

by Monica Nozza (4I)

This year Italy hosted the 24th edition of the International Olympiads in Informatics in Sirmione and Montichiari from 23rd to 30th September. The volunteers and the participants from all over the world stayed at the resort Garda Village in Sirmione, while the competition took place at the Garda Exhibition Centre (Centro Fiere del Garda) in Montichiari. There were 86 nations and each country had 4 contestants, 2 leaders (who had trained them) and some visitors, who could be relatives or friends.

The Regional Education Authority for Lombardy was chosen to organize the entire event; therefore, it decided to invite some students from the schools in Lombardy and Veneto and offer them the opportunity to do some voluntary work. A thousand applications were sent, but only 120 students were chosen.



Our school was invited to take part in the organization of the Olympiads and three students (Paola Ferrandi, Nina Zoe Russ and Monica Nozza), accompanied by our English teacher Ms. Sollazzo, went to Sirmione. Before the event, from 9th to 12th September, we attended a training course to learn how to behave properly at this important international event. We went back to Sirmione from 21st to 30th September; during the first two days we prepared all the materials for the participants, such as rucksacks with t-shirts inside and some brochures about Sirmione.

We had different roles: 86 of us were guides, which meant informing the delegations about everything and looking after them; 39 were part of the staff, like me. I worked at the info point, which was in the reception of the Garda Village and other 8 people had my same role. We decided to do four-hour shifts (from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.) so that we could work in pairs. The first day we were very busy since we had to help the guides to welcome their delegation or call them when it arrived; they came from different airports, so there were different times of arrival. Not everybody could speak English very well, so the knowledge of another language was very useful; for example, I was able to help the Chilean leader who could speak few words of English but knew Spanish.



Even though IOI2012 was not specifically designed for us, we felt part of an important international event, as we helped and supported the contestants. Besides having to speak and practise the languages I know, I have learnt a lot from this experience; there were no prejudices among us and I have understood that wherever you come from, there are no differences, we are all part of a big family.