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Garden City Robotics League Shows Teamwork And Spirit



The members of Team Fun and Crazy Creators, GCRL's two Jr. FLL teams, participated in the 5th Annual Jr. FLL Expo held at Longwood High School in Middle Island on Sunday March 3rd. The event is sponsored by The School Business Partnerships of Long Island. Longwood Central School District hosted the event and is one of the event sponsors. Team Fun won the Team Spirit Award and The Crazy Creators won the Teamwork Award.

Team Fun

Jr. FLL features a real-world challenge , to be solved by research, critical thinking and imagination. The challenge

for the Jr. FLL this year was to improve the quality of life for seniors by learning about the obstacles some people face as they get older. Jr. FLL teams have to build a simple machine with moving parts using LEGO pieces, and then create a Show-Me poster to represent their findings. The teams are evaluated in two parts, a presentation of their machine and poster, and an on-the-spot teamwork assignment.

The Crazy Creators, all third graders, are Charlie Ambach, Julian Bubniak, Riley Sanz, Max Sclafani and Nicholas Stamidis. They are coached by Ken Ambach and Constantine Stamidis.

After interviewing their Senior partners, the boys brainstormed about all the devices that their partners had mentioned and decided to focus on the Clock. They researched clocks using library books, the internet, and by examining real clocks, including antique grandfather and table clocks to learn about the mechanisms. The Crazy Creators built two models, a digital clock with a moving switch and motorized mechanical tower clock which used gears and pulleys to turn the hands at different speeds. The team learned how to use Lego's WeDo software and used a laptop to control the motor in the tower clock. Finally, they prepared a poster to explain their work and a presentation for the judges. The boys had a wonderful time at the Expo seeing all the other team's great projects and are excited to move up the the First Lego League and work with Lego Robotics next season.



Crazy Creators building their clock

The members of Team Fun are Harrison Cottrell (7), Maeve Dorney (9), Ella Mele (9), Matthew Tusiani-Eng (7), and Patrick Wren (9). The team, coached by Parent Emily Arnone, developed a LEGO model representing a Satellite Driven GPS where seniors could get to the hospital via a fully automated ambulance. The ambulance would get them to the hospital quickly when necessary without requiring a driver, and also directly through traffic. When interviewing their Senior Partners the members of Team Fun identified that GPS was a recent innovation that has greatly improved their lives by enhancing the Seniors' mobility. At the same time they began working on their project, Google announced that they were developing a fully automated vehicle, which Team Fun then incorporated into their project.

Garden City Robotics League (GCRL) in its rookie year, was founded and run by parents who wanted to bring more STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) programs to the community's children. They chose the FIRST continuum of programs after seeing the robotics competitions at other schools, were impressed, and wanted to participate.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a non profit founded by inventor Dean Kamen to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology. FIRST provides the First Robotics Competition and FIRST Tech Challenge for

high school students, FIRST LEGO League (FLL) for 9 to 14 years olds, and Jr. FIRST LEGO League (Jr. FLL) for 6 to 9 year olds. In the 2012/13 season “Senior Solutions Challenge”, there were over 200,000 children from more than 60 countries participating in the FLL. FIRST is created to model a sporting event - the competition looks like a pep rally and game, with team mascots, judges, referees, and pumping music.

The GCRL parents have recognized that their children have not only gained skills and knowledge in STEM areas, but have gained experience in other vital areas, such as creative problem solving, research, public speaking, and character development. One parent said “these kids’ presentation skills alone have improved so much in just this short time, that is a life long skill”. The Core Values are the cornerstone of the FLL program. These values distinguish this program from others of this kind. By embracing the 8 Core Values (eg. teamwork, cooperation, friendly competition, gracious professionalism, fun) participants learn that friendly competition and mutual gain are not separate goals, and that helping one another is the foundation of teamwork. It is wonderfully fitting and very exciting that the GCRL’s Jr. FLL teams received awards for their teamwork and spirit.

The GCRL will soon be forming teams for their next season, if you are interested in joining: email Trish Lynch: Jandtlynch@verizon.net and for more information: www.usfirst.org