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## Robotics Invitational

Now in its fifth year, the FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Long Island Half Hollow Hills Invitational has become a staple of the local FIRST Robotics Competition season. The event, which this year was held on Saturday, November 19 at Half Hollow Hills High School West in Dix Hills, New York, with support from School-Business Partnerships of Long Island, Inc. (SBPLI), is a way for teams to face off using the previous season's robots one final time before launching into the next build season.

This year's event featured 24 teams, which competed using the robots they built for the 2016 Long Island Regional FIRST® Robotics Competition, held in March, the challenge for which was dubbed was FIRST StrongHold™. This past season, and at the Invitational, FIRST robots battled on a 27-by-54-foot playing field on which participants earned points

by accomplishing set tasks. Some of the goals included traversing obstacles, throwing "boulders" into various openings of the castle and climbing the tower – which resulted in extra points.

The winning trio/alliance comprised of Patchogue-Medford High School Team #329 "Mohawks," West Islip High School Team #871 "Robotechs" and finally Team #2875 "CyberHawks" of Cold Spring Harbor. The finalists were Plainview-Old Bethpage High School Team #353 "POBots," Plainedge High School Team #527 "Red Dragons" and finally Wheatley School Team #2872 "CyberCats."

The Invitational is designed to showcase the benefits of robotics programs and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education to students, schools, communities and local businesses. As testing results and college entrances are now considered a measure

of a school's success, the implementation of STEM-focused curricula has become increasingly important to developing the careers of students, who can relate the skills learned from FIRST robotics to positions in the medical, business and other professional industries.

FIRST is leading the way for diversification in STEM fields. The robotics competition, according to SBPLI FIRST Robotics Competition Co-Director Debra Winter, is a "launching pad for future professional mathematicians and engineers. The program focuses especially on the importance of ensuring that young women and minorities are provided with a valuable technology-focused education."

For more information on SBPLI or the FIRST Robotics Competition, please visit [www.sbplifirst.org](http://www.sbplifirst.org).