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R.I. Students Test Robotics, Teamwork and Problem-Solving Skills at RWU

University hosts nearly 500 at FIRST LEGO League Robotics Tournament



Team Robowolves from Jamestown win Champion's Cup and RWU Scholarship. Image Credit: Roger Williams University

January 16, 2016 | Public Affairs Staff

Bristol, R.I -- Hundreds of Rhode Island families gathered on campus today to cheer on more than 300 local elementary and middle school students as they tested their robot design and programming skills at the annual FIRST[®] LEGO[®] League (FLL[®]) Rhode Island Robotics State Championship event, sponsored by National Grid.

Forty teams of students ages nine to 14, from across Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts spent the afternoon in a high-energy, sports-like tournament, where their LEGO MINDSTORMS robots navigated a series of obstacles set on a thematic playing surface to the tournament's "TRASH TREK" theme. The game missions included demolishing a building and salvaging valuable materials from the debris, converting organic material into fertilizer and reusing methane produced in a landfill to power a truck and/or factory.

In addition to building and programming their LEGO MINDSTORMS robot, the student teams also conducted research and created innovative solutions to explore one of the most relevant topics facing the work today: trash, as part of the FLL TRASH TREK Challenge.

Rep. James R. Langevin (D-R.I.) and President Farish provided the opening remarks for the championship now in its 11th year being hosted by the University.

Congressman Langevin believes that many of the youth at the championship event will be the next leaders of STEM advances and inventions.

“You are the workers of the future generation that will help the world to grow and succeed,” says Congressman Langevin. “How cool would it be to go to work everyday in a field that you love, and be able to invent something like the next driver-less car, the most advanced 3-D printer or biotechnology and medical technology that can improve a person’s quality of life. The list goes on and on and the possibilities for you are endless.”

Robowolves, from Jamestown won the first-place Champion’s Award and were awarded a Roger Williams University scholarship – a four-year scholarship of \$5,000 per year, a \$20,000 scholarship in total. The team will also have the opportunity to participate at the FIRST LEGO League World Festival, to be held in conjunction with the FIRST Championship, April 27-30, 2016, at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.

The FLL competition is judged in three areas: project, robot design and FLL core values, which embody aspects of teamwork and good sportsmanship. The top teams won by embodying FLL values of teamwork and mutual respect while achieving excellence and innovation in both a robot game and innovative project.

President Farish believes the FIRST LEGO League program plays an important role in engaging young students in thinking about STEM: “This is science and technology at its best because it’s hand-on, the students are not watching someone else do it, they are doing it themselves.”

For the full list of winning teams, visit: <http://risfnet.weebly.com/first-lego-league.html>