Lockheed Martin Sponsors Youth Team In Arkansas First Lego League Robotics Tournament

Lockheed Martin recently sponsored a team of six Camden-area fifth and sixth graders in the Arkansas Regional First Lego League (FLL) Robotics Tournament held in Mountain Home, AR.

(Photo: http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20071217/LAM087)

FFL is a robotics competition intended to create a partnership between students and business professionals for the purpose of fostering enthusiasm for science, engineering, discovery and technology. Students aged 9 to 14 are eligible to participate in the program.

Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control's Camden Operations joined forces with Camden-area students to create "Team Guided," which was founded by Lockheed Martin Engineer Joel Glidden early in 2007. The team is coached by Joel's wife, Jenny, and is supported by four engineering mentors from Lockheed Martin: Ryan Adams, Janice Burns, Joel Glidden and James Haner. The 2007 team is comprised of five fifth grade students and one sixth grade student, all from the Camden-Fairview School District.

On December 8, after 13 weeks of training, research, experimentation and practice, Team Guided participated in the FLL Arkansas Regional Tournament, which was attended by 40 teams from Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri and Oklahoma.

The tournament began with three qualifying matches for each team. Team Guided ranked eighth after its qualifying matches, with a top score of 235 points. This guaranteed the team a spot in the elimination matches. In its first elimination match, Team Guided won by a score of 235 to 70. Next the team faced the twelfth ranked team, and won by a score of 200 to 88.

Then Team Guided was pitted against the number one seed. Team Guided stepped up to the competition table and delivered a nearly flawless performance earning 290 points -- their top score for the day and the fourth highest score of any team in the tournament. But their opponents also had their best match of the day and edged past Team Guided to win the competition.

"We're thrilled to have made it so far as a rookie team," said Glidden. "These kids had a unique opportunity to work hand in hand with engineering professionals and see the importance of math and science to their educations. They have seen how they can turn their ideas into action and work together to solve complex, challenging and meaningful problems."

The team began working together in September 2007, when the rules for the tournament were announced. The team met twice weekly to learn problem solving, computer programming and design skills. Countless hours were spent brainstorming, designing, testing and troubleshooting their robot. In addition to this busy schedule, the team conducted an in-depth research project on energy consumption and alternative energy sources for their school. The team delivered presentations on the research project to school officials and tournament judges.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

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