

Elementary, middle school students compete in Robotics Challenge

By CCPS Press Releases

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Students from Charles County Public elementary and middle schools competed in the 2015 College of Southern Maryland Junior (LEGO) Division robotics challenge held Saturday, April 11, at the La Plata campus. The annual event is part of CSM's Institute of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (iSTEM), which provides programs to encourage students to pursue careers in STEM fields.

Eight Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) teams earned awards at the event. Fifty teams from schools in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties, as well as local private schools, competed in the event. This year's competition was titled "Nature's Fury," and required teams to research natural disasters and build robots to perform in a simulation designed to mock disaster assistance and clean-up efforts.

The Fury Fighters team from T.C. Martin Elementary School earned the top overall award in the Project category among competing elementary schools. This award is presented to the team whose robot achieves the best score during the project presentation portion of the event. Team members are fourth graders Jackson Bowler, Zion Chae, Jonathan Rand Crawford and Robbie Shelton, and fifth graders Zachary Anderson, Joseph Cowans, Josiah Franklin, Cole Harkness, Timmy O'Brien and Andon Tufts Russo. Team coaches are Michelle Reeves, a science teacher at Martin, Kara Decker, Martin fifth-grade teacher, and Ginger Rogers, a parent volunteer.

The Seahawks team from Milton M. Somers Middle School earned the top overall award in the Robot Design category among competing middle schools. Teams are selected for this award based on innovative work, team interviews and how their robots perform. Team members include Somers sixth graders James Goodwin, Wesley Hutcherson, Noah Kanter, Nauman Khan, Christopher Peterson, Casey Pham and Emily Smith, seventh graders Benjamin Ader and Nathan Daetwyler and eighth graders Sophia Khan and Nishil Patel. David Wood, a mathematics teacher at Somers, is the coach of the team.

The Mattawoman Robotics team from Mattawoman Middle School received the top overall award among middle school teams in the Robot Performance category. This award is presented to the team whose robot achieves the best score during the robot game portion of the challenge. Team members include Kimari Jackson, a sixth grader, seventh graders Keysha Scott and Romont Tardy, and eighth graders Christian Frazier, Erica Rigoroso, Lyndsay Rivers, Megan Rogers, Ahmad Thompson, Tyler Ulmschneider and Alicia Walker. John Paine, a science teacher at Mattawoman, is the team coach.

Walter J. Mitchell Elementary School's Team Damage Control received the Inspiration Award, which honors a team that displays extraordinary enthusiasm and spirit throughout the challenge. Team members include fourth graders Will Edwards, Joey Hastings and Madison Koontz, and fifth graders Kyra Brown, Makayla Curtin, Emma Davie, Ryan Kluh and Chase Miller. Team coaches are Corey Specht, Mitchell fourth-grade teacher, and Margaret Grove, science teacher at Mitchell.

The 1C3BREAKERS team from Theodore G. Davis Middle School received the Teamwork award among competing teams. This award recognizes a team that is able to work together to accomplish goals and demonstrates strong communication, effective problem solving and excellent time management. Members of the team include Davis sixth graders Ella Gerstman and Eric Maher, and eighth graders Amara Gammon,

Daniel Gonzales, Jonathan Heng, Abigail Semarge, Michael Stone, Brian Thomas and Marcus Williams. Joanne Shelak, science teacher at Davis, is the team coach.

The Fast and Furious Dragons team from Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School earned an award in the Gracious Professionalism category. This award recognizes a team whose members demonstrate respect to one another, and to other teams throughout the challenge. Team members include fourth graders James Barrow, John Fowler and Khalis Walls, and fifth graders Talaya Hayden, Charlize Mills and Yeabsira Temesgen. Team coaches are Paul Dunlevy, science teacher at Mudd, and Jason Peer, school counselor at Mudd.

The Panthers team from Piccowaxen Middle School received the Mechanical Design award among competing teams. This award is presented to the team that designs and develops a mechanically sound robot that is efficient, durable and highly capable of performing challenge missions. Students on the Panthers team include seventh graders Cian McCabe and Micah Stillwell, and eighth graders Aristia McLaughlin, Alyssa Simpson and Macie Summers. Brian Colaizzi, a science teacher at Piccowaxen, is the team coach.

The Techno-fins team from Mary H. Matula Elementary School earned an award in the Research category of the challenge. Teams receive this award for presenting an in-depth explanation and solution to the challenge project, which includes a team presentation to a panel of judges. Team members include fourth graders Kyle Blanton, Zoe Hakim, Nathan Michael, Megan Pham, and T.J. Taylor, and fifth graders Anaya Barnes, Diallo Barnes and Andrew Garcia. Coach of the team is Christina Caron, a learning resource teacher at Matula.

For more information about the challenge, visit the College of Southern Maryland's website at <http://www.csmd.edu/roboticschallenge/>.

Charles County Public Schools provides 26,500 students in grades prekindergarten through 12 with an academically challenging education. Located in Southern Maryland, Charles County Public Schools has 36 schools that offer a technologically advanced, progressive and high quality education that builds character, equips for leadership and prepares students for life, careers and higher education.

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