

Ultineers Tournament deemed a success

The superintendents from Warren, Northampton, Halifax, Hertford and Bertie Counties and the Weldon City Schools along with their staff were very excited that the day of the tournament had finally arrived.

The day started early as the volunteers began to arrive and grab their t-shirts along with a cup of coffee (and danish) and made their way to their assigned station. Then before you knew it the 22 teams and 220 students exploded onto the Halifax Community College (HCC) campus and the Roanoke River Valley Education Consortium (RRVEC) Ultineers 4th Invitational Robotics Tournament swung into high gear.

The coaches collected their team's t-shirts and packets of information and headed to the "Pit" to set up their headquarters for the day. Throughout the morning all the teams presented different aspects of their work to three different panels of judges and tuned up their robots for the afternoon's robot game. After the morning rounds all the teams and volunteers were provided a delicious lunch and prepared for the afternoon table challenge.

The afternoon portion of the competition began with all the teams being introduced one by one as they burst through the smoke-filled entrance accompanied with a spectacular light show. They were greeted by a lineup of high fiving volunteers that reached across the entire auditorium. The only thing that was more impressive than the special effects and music was the delighted faces of all the team members as they made their way into the area and were greeted by the volunteer lineup.

The afternoon robot game competition showed the amazing work the



Contributed
Northampton County's Willis Hare Elementary/Conway Middle School's 'The Roboticians' took home the Champion Award in the recent Ultineers 4th Invitation Robotics Tournament.

students had completed; designing, building and programming their robots to complete as many missions as they could in 2 1/2 minutes to score the maximum point. After all the teams completed their three rounds of robot runs the judges returned to their deliberations for which teams would receive awards.

As the judges deliberated the teams were given the opportunity to show off their dance moves as the DJ kept the fun rolling in the arena until the awards were ready to be announced.

Twelve teams took home thirteen trophies with Northampton's Willis Hare Elementary/Conway Middle team "The Roboticians" taking home the Champion Award.

Grace Smith, coach of The Roboticians, stated after the tournament, "I just want to take a moment to thank you for a WONDERFUL day on Saturday. Our students (as well as Ms. Cochran [team mentor] and myself) thoroughly enjoyed it. It

was one of the most exciting days of my teaching career-- so much fun! Thank you for organizing such a great event. I know that a lot of time was invested into putting on something of that magnitude, and everything went so smoothly. Our students (along with the coaches) learned so much this season and can't wait to get started again next year. Seeing children so excited about learning is quite an amazing experience."

"As I watched the teams move through the morning and prepare for their judging presentations I was delighted to see how focused they were and how much fun they were having while dealing with some stressful challenges," Dr. Monica Smith-Woofter, Northampton County Schools Superintendent explained. "Their ideas and presentations were very impressive."

"This tournament has been amazing. The work these students have displayed throughout the day impressed the judg-

es and referees and has made us all very proud." exclaimed Dr. Eric Cunningham, Halifax County Superintendent.

"We had a great time and learned a lot! I was really impressed by the entire day and am so excited for next year!" stated Hillary Braden, Weldon Middle School coach.

Dr. Ray Spain, Warren County Superintendent commented, "It was fun to watch all the students cheer for one another as the award winners were announces and see all the proud smiles on the faces of all the award-winning teams. One thing was clear at the end of the day, as we plan to expand this program again next year everyone will have to step up their game if they hope to win an award next season."

Dr. Michael Elam, President of Halifax Community College, said, "This was a great day we were delighted to host such an amazing event."

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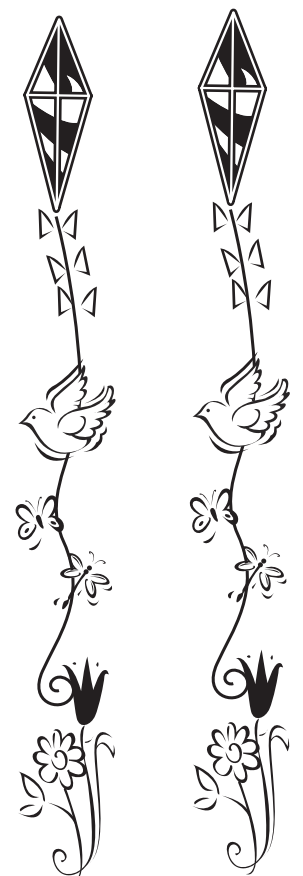
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