

ROBOTEAMS GROW IN BROOKLYN

More than 400 Brooklyn middle schoolers packed the halls and gymnasium of NYU-Poly for the 11th annual Brooklyn qualifying round of the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) LEGO League (FLL) robotics challenge. Twenty-two teams advanced to the Citywide FLL Robotics final in March.

Meanwhile, in NYU-Poly's Pfizer Auditorium, 38 high school teams from the New York metro area linked to a NASA video to discover their challenge: to create and program their large robots to hang geometric shapes on a grid during the citywide FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC). Fitted with kits and instructions, the high school students spent the next two months preparing for the intense competition.



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FIRST LEGO League Robotics Challenge

Amid thunderous applause and spirited shouts from teachers, parents and team mascots, 37 teams faced off in this year's FLL Brooklyn Qualifier, which challenged middle schoolers to design and program small LEGO robots to complete biomedical tasks like stenting blocked arteries or mending broken bones. Mentored by teachers—as well as NYU-Poly graduate fellows who conducted in-classroom lessons to complement the robotics challenge at 16 of the schools—the teams spent months creating the robots debuted at the January 8 competition. Teams also presented research papers on biomedical topics.


Among the five boroughs, Brooklyn schools boasted the highest rate of participation. Demand for slots was so fierce that due to space constraints, several Brooklyn schools had to compete in the Manhattan and Staten Island FLL qualifiers. The Champions Award went to PS 11, Team: Mission 11, Genesis Xaverian, Team: Genesis and IS 318, Team: Blood, Sweat and Gearz. Teams also competed in research, robot design and teamwork.

"The FIRST robotics events ignite youngsters' interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) at a critical time in their educational lives, and the results can be profound, influencing their future performance and even their career paths," said Jerry Hultin, president of NYU-Poly. "NYU-Poly has long been committed to excellence in STEM subjects at the highest levels, and it is very

rewarding for our faculty and graduate fellows to support a new generation of scientists and engineers through FIRST."

Of the 16 FLL teams mentored by NYU-Poly graduate fellows, 13 advanced to the citywide finals.

This year's FIRST events at NYU-Poly were sponsored by Time Warner Cable's East Region/NYC, Consolidated Edison, Swiss Re and The David L. Klein, Jr. Foundation; NYU-Poly is the affiliate partner. FIRST is an organization dedicated to inspiring young people to be science and technology leaders, engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills.

In all, NYU-Poly supports robotics/mechatronics initiatives in 18 low-income schools as part of the Central Brooklyn STEM Initiative (CBSI). This program sends NYU-Poly graduate students to 18 elementary, middle and high schools to challenge young people to design, build and operate robotic devices, and teach them mechatronics through hands-on learning activities. The initiative is a public-private partnership supported by The Black Male Donor Collaborative, the Brooklyn Community Foundation, Motorola Foundation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, XEROX Foundation, NY Space Grant Consortium and Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate; the supporting graduate fellows program receives major funding from National Science Foundation's GK-12 Fellows Program. 



- Benjamin Banneker Elementary PS 256 — 1
- Benjamin Banneker HS — 2
- Langston Hughes PS 233 — 3
- Stanley Eugene Clark PS 399 — 4
- Boys and Girls High School — 5
- The Bedford Village PS 3 — 6
- Urban Assembly Institute of Math & Science for Young Women — 7
- Philippa Schuyler IS 383 — 8
- Ronald Edmunds Learning Center MS 113 — 9
- Eugenio Maria De Hostos IS 318 — 10
- Bedford Academy — 11
- Dr. Ronald E. McNair PS 5 — 12
- Teunis G. Bergen PS 9 — 13
- It Takes a Village Academy — 14
- Mott Hall Bridges Academy — 15
- Crispus Attucks PS 21 — 16
- Young Scholars Academy for Discovery and Exploration PS 636 — 17
- Purvis J. Behan PS 11 — 18

1. PS 3 RoboTigers compete in the NYU-Poly gym during the FIRST LEGO League Brooklyn Qualifiers. (left)
2. A look from above onto the 11th Annual FLL Brooklyn Qualifier, supported by nearly 75 members of the NYU-Poly community who volunteered for the day's activities.
3. NYU-Poly President Jerry M. Hultin at the opening ceremony of the FLL Brooklyn Qualifiers.
4. The students of PS 11 take the winning run around the NYU-Poly Gym after capturing the 1st Place Champions Award.
5. Vikram Kapila (center), NYU-Poly associate professor of mechanical engineering and lead of the Central Brooklyn STEM Initiative, with Banneker Bots and NYU-Poly graduate fellow and mentor Nicole Abaid at the FLL Brooklyn Qualifiers.

