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P.S. 11 Students, Robots, Compete in Lego League

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NYU P.S. 11 wins big during the FIRST LEGO League robot competition qualifier this January.



The atmosphere at the First Lego League robot competition qualifier in January felt similar to a WrestleMania match — except the gladiators in question were Lego robots created by hundreds of Brooklyn elementary school students. This year, P.S. 11's Robotics Team, Mission 11, captured the first place award at that contest, which was held at the NYU-Poly's Jacobs Academic Building. On Sunday, Mission 11 will take part in the final round of the New York City regional competition at the Jacob Javits Center.

Teams from all over New York City have spent months preparing for the opportunity to qualify for the final. Beginning in early September, with the launch of the year's challenge, parents, educators and students devoted large blocks of after-school and weekend hours preparing their FLL teams.

The competition requires that kids do the majority of the work and that teams concentrate on specific themes. This year's premise, "Body Forward," explored the world of biomedical engineering. The work required extensive research into medical technology advances, including the development of the pacemakers, stents, nerve mapping, bionic eyes and more.

The research component was balanced by the development of a Mindstorms NXT robot capable of meeting all the FLL challenges. The robots were built and programmed by the kids to negotiate a route through an obstacle course and perform particular operations within a 150-second competition time limit.

The challenge put to these teams is complex and some of the missions are simply too much for the robots to execute. However, disappointment is more than balanced by the joy of collaboration, as teams of girls and boys work together and produce an object which has a life of its own.

The competition, which is free and open to the public, will take place this Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Jacob Javits Center. For more information on the event, call organizers at (973) 596-3234, (718) 260-3383, or email randyschaeffer@gmail.com.