NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wilton Library's Robotics Team Off to Championships

Wilton, CT – For the first time ever, Singularity Technology, Wilton Library's robotics team, has qualified to compete in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) Super-Regionals Championship, to be held in March in Scranton, PA. FIRST Tech Challenge is a global robotics competition. The Wilton Library team had an outstanding performance at the FTC CT State Championships, held this past Saturday, February 18 at Greens Farms Academy in Westport. Earning second place in the FTC State Competition, the team was recognized for excelling in all facets of the challenge, including innovative and successful robot design and the embodiment of the FIRST value of Gracious Professionalism®.

"We are so excited to have come this far," said team captain Nickia Muraskin of Singularity Technology's performance against twenty-three other teams from around Connecticut.

FTC competitions are alliance-based. That means teams are partnered with one another for every match. Alliances change from match to match and former partners turn into adversaries. It's all part of FTC's goal of developing team-building skills and cooperative approaches to problem solving among the young engineers which they summarize with the trademarked terms "Gracious Professionalism" and "Coopertition."

Albert Wei, the team's software captain, finds wisdom in Gracious Professionalism®. "To me, it is less about the robot that we make and more about the way we act," he remarked. "It has motivated us to integrate as many people as we can into our building process, because our product turns out better when everyone works together."

Susan Lauricella, Wilton Library's Teen Services and Maker Space Manager noted, "This has been such a wonderful learning and bonding exercise. The group has grown in experience in the last year or so and really has come together as a team in the true sense and spirit of the word."

The Singularity Technology team consists of ten middle and high school students. The team members are Cathy Campbell, Alex Cameron, Navod Jayawardhane, Emilie McCann, Nickia Muraskin, Harris Patnaik, Khloe Rackley, Rishabh Raniwala, Rohit Singhal, and Albert Wei. Members meet and work at the library with volunteer mentors Tom Abend and Paul Lauricella and library staffers Susan Lauricella and Thomas Kozak.

The team now has less than four weeks to prepare for its most intense competition to date. These young engineers never stop thinking about the game challenges, the strengths and weaknesses of their competitors, and the improvements they can make to their robot.

Part of the team's success comes from their integration of various sensors and custom 3D-printed designs. The team uses online CAD programs and the 3D printer in the library's Innovation Station to create everything from bevel gears to cap ball holding parts, all in SingulTech's signature blue and green. Team member Rishabh Raniwala is "most proud of how far our coding has come, it's been a huge improvement over last year."

This year, the team made a strategic decision to focus on two specific challenges with the robot: lifting the cap ball and pressing infrared beacons in both autonomous and teleop modes. "Our cap ball lifting and beacon-pressing mechanisms are incredibly reliable," says team member Harris Patnaik. "Much more so than those of our competitors."

"Our team needs to spend a lot of time practicing driving in high-stress situations, so we can be prepared for anything that could possibly go wrong," added Emilie McCann, the team's build captain. "Additionally, we have to create lots of promotional materials not only for our own team, but for FIRST as a whole."

The team is most grateful for the support of Jet Blue, Wilton Hardware, Glenn Hemmerle and McHancock County LLC, as well as Wilton Library for the initial funding. Anyone wishing to support the team's push to the Super-Regionals may make an online donation through Wilton Library's website and specify "Robotics" in the comments field.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a not-for-profit organization with the mission "to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership."

To learn more about the FIRST Tech Challenge, visit www.firstinspires.org/robotics/ftc or http://7034st.wixsite.com/singultech to see more of the team and its robot.

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Caption: Wilton Library's robotics team, Singularity Technology, recently qualified in the CT State Competition to move to the Super-Regional Competitions in Scranton, PA in March. Standing left to right: Rohit Singhal, Albert Wei, Alex Cameron, Harris Patnaik, Rishabh Raniwala; kneeling left to right: Navod Jayawardhane, Khloe Rackley, Emilie McCann, Cathy Campbell, Nickia Muraskin. To help fund the team's fundraising endeavor, visit www.wiltonlibrary.org.