

Chairman's Award Submission

Executive Summary

Team Name: Highlanders #4499

Sponsors: NASA, Neaera Consulting, Otter Box, Pleasing Software, ENCORP, Home State Bank, Trihydro, Wolf Robotics, Bank of Colorado, FleetwoodGoldcoWyard, Virginia English Family, the Weibler Family and Bo Johnston MUD Consultants.

Briefly describe the impact of the FIRST program on team participants.

The FIRST programs have influenced our team members' intended careers, pulling several individuals toward STEM degrees. One in particular has moved from looking into a career in law to seeking a career in engineering. Another has discovered CAD and is planning on taking classes to explore it further. One of the team members has used the information he has learned through his years in FIRST robotics to do real-world work. He wrote gaming software and won first place in a national competition.

Role model characteristics that other teams can emulate

Our team exhibits gracious professionalism. One example of this trait occurred during the final week of the build cycle. A nearby team had a critical need to use a mill. Since they did not have access to a mill, we let them use ours. Not only did we put our own urgent milling needs on hold and let them use our mill for two days, our experienced team members provided training on the safe use of the mill, assisted with the fabrication process, and even made the difficult cuts for them.

Impact of FIRST on team and community

The Highlanders have had the privilege of speaking to many companies and groups in Northern Colorado. From Jr.FLL groups to technology corporations to banks, we have spoken about the different levels of FIRST programs and FRC in particular. The Highlanders are also trying to start an FLL team at a local elementary school in 2013. This new team would bring a previously unavailable level of STEM education to this school.

Team's innovative methods to spread FIRST message

The Highlanders volunteered at a youth triathlon that benefitted the Cardiac Care Unit at Children's Hospital. Some of us helped on the course, directing kids where to go, while the rest talked to kids and parents about the benefits of learning robotics and the FIRST programs. We

engaged the younger kids by allowing them to drive our FTC robot from last year, and shared with them ways to start or join a Jr.FLL or FLL team in Northern Colorado.

Strength of partnerships

We have received significant funding from several sponsors, including NASA, OtterBox, Pleasing Software, Neaera Consulting and Trihydro, along with others. Our most significant partnership, though, is with FleetwoodGoldcoWyard. Engineers from their facility in Loveland, CO, have advised us on many issues, from programming to designing. They have provided material and given us an in-depth tour of their facility. Team members have shadowed their employees to gain valuable career information, as well.

Team's communication methods

To have a successful rookie year, our team decided to organize into several different groups. Each team member had to 'apply' for a team leadership role in a field of work. Each member gave a speech explaining why they would make a good leader for the role they wanted, and then the other team members voted on who would be the best person for the job. Each group leader is in charge of learning, understanding and explaining their job to sponsors, mentors and team members.

Other matters of interest

The Highlanders are very unique in that we are students from four different schools in the Northern Colorado area. We are part of a special organization that our mentors created specifically for the sponsorship of robotic teams. This non-profit is an organization that encompasses the passion of robotics and real life business interactions with the community, along with gracious professionalism and teamwork for youth in Northern Colorado.