

USU Extension 4-H Clubs Excel at Robotics Competition

Shelby Ruud

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Several Utah State University Extension 4-H clubs received top awards at the FIRST Tech Challenge in February at Weber State University.

The FIRST Tech Challenge robotics competition provides an opportunity for student teams to design, build and program their robots to compete in alliances against other teams. Teams develop strategies and construct robots based on engineering principles.

The PrestidigiTaters 4-H club from Washington County received the INSPIRE award, the highest honor of the competition. The INSPIRE award is given to the team that communicates their experience, enthusiasm and knowledge to other teams, their communities and the judges. Team members include McCade Larsen, Kason Peacock, Bailee Allen and Madi Allen.

“This team is successful because they are four really sharp youth who are heavily involved in 4-H Teen Council and STEM,” said Brian Allen, coach for the PrestidigiTaters and father of Madi and Bailee Allen. “All four have grown up with the ‘maker’ mindset, which is all about creative problem solving. And not problem solving because you're forced to, or even need to, but because you enjoy it and like the challenge and the fun of it.”

Two 4-H clubs from Iron County, the Atomic Randomizers and Randomonium, along with their ally team, Hurricane High Robotics, won the Robot Game by completing complex challenges with their robots such as moving scattered blocks into specific zones and climbing small

ladders. The Atomic Randomizers team includes Zach Zufelt, Tyler Zufelt, Andrew Keen, Nathan Keen, Marc Bulloch and Alec Healy. Randomonium includes Reese Jones, Bradley Turner, Exley Hackwell, Tyler Rust, Skyler Barr, Tyler Gover and Josiah Fisher.

Winning these awards at the state competition qualified the teams to move on to the FTC Super Regionals Challenge in Oakland,



California.

“Going to Oakland will give these teen leaders the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of coding, robotics and problem solving at a higher level,” said Paul Hill, USU 4-H Extension professor from Washington County. “The 4-H program has not only been instrumental in organizing these teams and helping them get funding, but also in providing leadership experiences that have allowed them to sharpen their presentation and relationship skills.”

Those wishing to help with the expenses of traveling to Oakland can donate to the PrestidigiTaters by visiting <https://www.gofundme.com/haqwaqzw>. For more information about USU Extension 4-H clubs, visit utah4h.org.

Writer: Shelby Ruud
shelby.ruud@usu.edu Contact: Paul Hill
paul.hill@usu.edu

Photo #1, Washington County - The PrestidigiTaters

Photo #2, Iron County - Those in neon green shirts, Atomic Randomizers; Those in purple shirts, Randomonium. Those in white shirts, Hurricane High team