

FIRST® Long Island Announces Award Winners from the 2023 FIRST Robotics Competition Long Island Regionals



Team #28 “Pierson Whalers” from Pierson High School in Sag Harbor was the recipient of the *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Impact Award at the *FIRST* Robotics Competition Long Island Regional #1, which took place at Hofstra University’s David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex in Hempstead on March 21-22, 2023.



Robots from Team #2872 “Cybercats” from Wheatley School in Old Westbury and Team #358 “Robotic Eagles” from Hauppauge High School try to place the game pieces to score points during a match at the *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition Long Island Regional #2 at Hofstra University’s David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex in Hempstead on March 25, 2023.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Long Island presented its 2023 Long Island Regionals on March 21-22 and March 24-25 at Hofstra University’s David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex in Hempstead. Ninety-two teams from Long Island, New York City, upstate New York, Brazil, Chinese Taipei, the Dominican Republic, India and the United Kingdom took part in the four-day *FIRST*® Robotics Competition. This event culminated with awards and honors for areas such as design excellence, competitive play, sportsmanship and high-impact partnerships among schools, businesses and communities.

“This was one of the best Long Island Regionals we’ve experienced,” says Bertram Dittmar, Executive Director, *FIRST* Long Island. “All participating teams demonstrated tremendous teamwork, gracious professionalism™ and critical thinking. The fun and excitement of the competition was evident as many students and mentors got caught up in the spirit of the event. Participants, volunteers, and sponsors had the opportunity to experience the beauty of engineering and technology combined with the excitement of a competitive event.”

As a *FIRST*® Robotics Competition, the Long Island Regional featured teams of high school-aged students from across Long Island, the New York metropolitan area and even around the world competing in a cooperative tournament-style robotics competition. Guided by their mentors, students rely on their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) to compete for honors and recognition that reward design excellence, competitive play and sportsmanship. This high-energy event further emphasizes the importance of high-impact partnerships between students, universities, businesses, and communities.

Last year’s competition was dubbed CHARGED UPSM Presented by Haas, in which two alliances are invited to process game pieces to bring energy to their community. The alliances do this by retrieving their game pieces from substations and placing them into the grid. Human players provide the game pieces to the robots from the substations. In the last moments of each match, alliance robots race to dock or engage with their charge station.

Long Island Regional #1

Ellen Kressner, the mentor of Team #2638 “Rebel Robotics” from Great Neck South High School, was named a Finalist for the Woodie Flowers Award. Winners of the Dean’s List Finalist Award were Shaan M. of Team #2638 “Rebel Robotics” from Great Neck South High School and Abigail B. of Team #810 “The Mechanical Bulls” of Smithtown High School.

Long Island Regional #2

Tia Singh, the mentor of Team #1796 “RoboTigers” from Queens Technical High School, was named a Finalist for the Woodie Flowers Award. Winners of the Dean’s List Finalist Award were Kali N. of Team #533 “The PSiCotics” from Lindenhurst High School and Laura L. of Team #3624 “Thundercolts” of Half Hollow Hills High School West & Half Hollow Hills High School East in Dix Hills.

[See Full List of Winners on Page 2](#)

The Full List of Winners of the 2023 FIRST Long Island Regional #1 Awards Include:

Award	Team #	Team Name	School/Town
Imagery Award in honor of Jack Kamen	5659	Team Supreme	Bridgehampton School/Bridgehampton
Innovation in Control Award	329	Mohawks	Patchogue Medford Sr. High School/Medford
Creativity Award sponsored by Rockwell Automation	5736	Kingsmen Robotics	Kings Park High School/Kings Park
Excellence in Engineering Award	3015	Ranger Robotics	Spencerport High School/Spencerport, NY
Autonomous Award sponsored by Ford	7539	Elev8	Dhirubhai Ambani International School/Mumbai, India
Quality Award	2872	CyberCats	Wheatley School/Old Westbury
Gracious Professionalism Award	2869	Regal Eagles	Bethpage High School/Bethpage
Team Spirit Award	2265	Fe Maidens	Bronx High School of Science/Bronx
Team Sustainability Award	4122	Ossining O-Bots	Ossining High School/Ossining, NY
Rookie All Star Award ***	9016	Syosset Braves Robotics	Syosset High School/Syosset
Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors	7636	Robomania	National Experimental High School at Central Taiwan Science Park/Taichung City, Taiwan
Wildcard	9016	Syosset Braves Robotics ***	Syosset High School/ Syosset
Judges' Award	870	TEAM R.I.C.E.	Southold Jr. Sr. High School/Southold
Regional Finalist #1	2872	CyberCats	Wheatley School/Old Westbury
Regional Finalist #2	870	TEAM R.I.C.E.	Southold Jr. Sr. High School/Southold
Regional Finalist #3	334	TechKnights	Brooklyn Technical High School/Brooklyn
Regional Winner #1**	3015	Ranger Robotics	Spencerport High School/Spencerport, NY
Regional Winner #2**	1468	Hicksville J-Birds	Hicksville High School/Hicksville
Regional Winner #3**	2875	CyberHawks	Cold Spring Harbor Jr. Sr. HS/Cold Spring Harbor
Regional Engineering Inspiration Award**	2638	Rebel Robotics	Great Neck South High School/Great Neck
Regional FIRST Impact Award* **	28	Pierson Whalers	Pierson Middle High School/Sag Harbor

The Full List of Winners of the 2023 FIRST Long Island Regional #2 Awards Include:

Award	Team #	Team Name	School/Town
Imagery Award in honor of Jack Kamen	3624	ThunderColts	Half Hollow Hills High Schools West & East/Dix Hills
Innovation in Control Award	870	TEAM R.I.C.E.	Southold Jr. Sr. High School/Southold
Autonomous Award sponsored by Ford	594	StuyPulse	Stuyvesant High School/New York, NY
Quality Award	871	Robotechs	West Islip High School/West Islip
Gracious Professionalism Award	263	Aftershock	Sachem High Schools North and East/Ronkonkoma
Team Spirit Award	564	Longwood Robotics	Longwood High School/Middle Island
Team Sustainability Award	353	POBots	Plainview-Old Bethpage JFK High School/Plainview
Highest Rookie Seed ***	9016	Syosset Braves Robotics	Syosset High School/Syosset
Rookie Inspiration Award ***	9016	Syosset Braves Robotics	Syosset High School/Syosset
Rookie All Star Award ***	9184	Zeta	Sevenoaks School/Sevenoaks, UK
Industrial Design Award sponsored by General Motors	1468	Hicksville J-Birds	Hicksville High School/Hicksville
Judges' Award	1880	Warriors of East Harlem	East Harlem Tutorial Program/New York, NY
Regional Finalist #1	329	Mohawks	Patchogue-Medford High School/Medford
Regional Finalist #2	5736	Kingsmen Robotics	Kings Park High School/Kings Park
Regional Finalist #3	5099	Northport Robotics	Northport High School/Northport
Regional Winner #1**	694	StuyPulse	Stuyvesant High School/New York, NY
Regional Winner #2**	870	TEAM R.I.C.E.	Southold High School/Southold
Regional Winner #3**	533	The PS1cotics	Lindenhurst High School/Lindenhurst
Regional Engineering Inspiration Award**	2869	Regal Eagles	Bethpage High School/Bethpage
Regional FIRST Impact Award* **	1796	RoboTigers	Queens Technical High School/Queens, NY

* The Chairman's Award is the most prestigious award of the event and recognizes the team that embodies the goals and purpose of FIRST and best represents a model for other teams to emulate.

** These teams were eligible to participate in the 2022 FIRST® Championship presented by Qualcomm® Incorporated at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas on April 20-23.

*** Denotes a rookie team.

FIRST® Long Island Kicks Off 2024 Robotics Season with Distribution of Kits of Parts

FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Long Island kicked off the beginning of the 2024 robotics season with the distribution of Kits of Parts (KoP) to participating local high school robotics teams on January 6. The KoPs were distributed at Schenck USA Corporation in Deer Park, which has been a long-standing sponsor of the FIRST® Long Island Regional Robotics Competition and supplier of parts for the robotics teams.

The event saw mentors and members of various high school robotics teams coming to receive their KoPs after being briefed on this year's challenge.

The KoPs serve as a foundation for participating teams, providing an array of components donated by suppliers across multiple industries. These kits play a pivotal role in shaping the creative process for the teams as they prepare for the upcoming robotics season.

The 2024 FIRST® Long Island Regional is scheduled to take place at Hofstra University from March 21-23. This is a milestone year in that this will be the 25th year of the FIRST® Long Island Regional. The theme for this year's challenge is CRESCENDOSM presented by Haas.

In CRESCENDOSM, two alliances of three teams compete in a dynamic game where they aim to score or play notes across three field elements.

The objectives include amplifying speakers, getting on stage, harmonizing, and taking the spotlight within a limited time.

Additional rewards are earned for meeting specific scoring thresholds and cooperating with opponents. Robots start autonomously in their alliance's zone, playing preloaded notes and collecting more. During driver control, alliances strategically collect and play notes, amplifying speakers for extra points. Cooperative actions in the first 45 seconds influence rankings. As time runs out, robots race to get on stage, deliver notes, and achieve harmony for bonus points. The alliance with the highest score wins.

"We are thrilled to kick off the 2024 robotics season with the distribution of Kits of Parts," said FIRST® Long Island Executive Director Bertram Dittmar. "We

look forward to witnessing the incredible creations that these talented students will bring to the competition and bring with them their solutions, teamwork and gracious professionalism."



Team Mentor Matthew Corrigan of Great Neck South High School Team #2638 "Rebel Robotics" poses with the CRESCENDOSM Kit of Parts at the FRC Kickoff.

Local Teams Shine at FIRST® Championship

Some of the local robotics teams came home winners from the 2023 FIRST® Championship presented by BAE Systems, which took place at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston, Texas on April 19-22.

Shaan M. of Team #2638 "Rebel Robotics" from Great Neck South High School was the recipient of the FIRST Dean's List Award.

Team #870 "TEAM R.I.C.E." from Southold Jr./Sr. High School was the Championship Division Winner in the Daly Division.



Pictured (left to right): *FIRST* Long Island FRC Volunteer Coordinator Ellen Pitrelli, Executive Director Bertram Dittmar, Volunteer of the Year Marin Kobin and *FIRST* Long Island FRC Regional Director/Program Delivery Partner Larry Toonkel.

Chris Early, Marin Kobin Named Volunteers of the Year

Chris Early and Marin Kobin were named Volunteers of the Year at the *FIRST*[®] Long Island Regionals at Hofstra University’s David S. Mack Arena at Hofstra University last March.

Mr. Early is the owner and founder of Early Electronics, a boutique consulting firm specializing in software engineering. In fact, he started his career working for the scientist Margaret Hamilton, who actually coined the term “software engineer” and was a pioneer in that field. Through the years, he has worked on a wide range of highly visible projects in the financial, transit, medical, military and industrial fields.

Mr. Early has been a volunteer at *FIRST* Robotics Competitions on Long Island for the past 24 years. He started as a team mentor, but soon became involved in producing the Long Island

Regionals as a Board Member and then as part of the *FIRST* Long Island executive management team. He has taken on various volunteer roles at FRC, FTC and FLL events, including robot inspector, judge, merchandise sales, pit administrator supervisor and venue coordinator.

Ms. Kobin is a systems engineer who has been working with the Navy and Marine Corps for the past thirteen years. She recently graduated from a selective leadership program through work and added to her technical work by also becoming a supervisor. She is a *FIRST* Robotics Competition alumna from Team #1468, the “J-Birds” from Hicksville High School. After high school, she went on to coach and volunteer across the *FIRST* progression of programs in the Finger Lakes, Chesapeake and Long Island regions during and after college.



Pictured (left to right): Volunteer of the Year Chris Early, *FIRST* Long Island FRC Volunteer Coordinator Ellen Pitrelli and *FIRST* Long Island FRC Regional Director/Program Delivery Partner Larry Toonkel.

Twenty-Three Teams Take Part in the 11th Annual Half Hollow Hills Invitational

Twenty-three teams participated in the 11th annual Half Hollow Hills Invitational, which took place at Half Hollow Hills High School West in Dix Hills on October 28, 2023. The postseason invitational, which marked the end of the 2023 *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition season, was presented by the Half Hollow Hills School District and *FIRST* Long Island.

The teams competed in the same challenge as they did in the Long Island Regional, which was CHARGED UPSM Presented by Haas. The winning alliance consisted of the “Mohawks” from Patchogue-Medford High School (Team #329), the “Kingsmen” from Kings Park High School (Team #5736) and the “HURRICANES” from Westhampton Beach High School (Team #3171).

The competition featured an impressive display of creativity, collaboration and technical prowess as many three-team

alliances brought their robots to the playing field to solve a variety of problems to score points and win rounds.

The HHH Invitational was an opportunity for students to enhance their problem-solving abilities, cooperation, and teamwork, all while showcasing their robots that had previously competed in the Long Island Regionals earlier this year. The event was not only a testament to the dedication and hard work of the participating districts, but also highlighted the invaluable support from the local communities and businesses.

“We were thrilled to witness the incredible talent and passion displayed by the students at the Half Hollow Hills Invitational,” said *FIRST* Long Island Executive Director Bertram Dittmar. “Their achievements not only showcase their tremendous work, but also proves the importance of youth STEM education.”



Members of the Patchogue-Medford “Mohawks” (Team #329), Kings Park “Kingsmen” (Team #5736) and Westhampton Beach “HURRICANES” (Team #3171) pose with their winning robots and first-place trophies at the Half Hollow Hills Invitational.

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THANK YOU TO OUR PAST PROGRAM DELIVERY PARTNERS

There has been a change in leadership for our programs for *FIRST* Long Island. We welcome our new Program Delivery Partners (PDPs) and thank our former PDPs, who have since moved on, for their service.

The new Program Delivery Partners for *FIRST* LEGO League (FLL) Challenge are Chris Baker and Troy Douglas. Rick Ramhap, who has been a *FIRST* volunteer for 15 years, was the FLL Challenge PDP before becoming the FLL Explore/Discover PDP with JJ Gembinski.

Marin Kobin and Caryn Meirs are the new PDPs for the *FIRST* Tech Challenge, following the departure of Ed Parry, who served in that position for two years, when the tournaments were virtual.

David Johnson has stepped down after volunteering as a PDP for the *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) for many years and serving as co-director for several more years. Larry Toonkel has been named the new director of the FRC.

We would be remiss if we didn't take an opportunity to thank Janet Anderson and Stephanie Stern for their 20-plus years of service and dedication not only to the *FIRST* LEGO League program, but to the whole *FIRST* Community on Long Island. Their leadership, experience and professionalism will be sorely missed. While we are sad to see them step down, we are thrilled to see that they still would love to remain engaged in our *FIRST* Community!

MEET OUR PROGRAM DELIVERY PARTNERS



Rick Ramhap

Rick Ramhap became involved in *FIRST* Long Island fifteen years ago, when he formed a *FIRST* LEGO League Jr. (now known as *FIRST* LEGO League Explore) program within the organization and started a team for his two children. In 2021, he was named one of *FIRST* LEGO® League Explore's Volunteer of the Year by *FIRST*. He was one of four Volunteers of the Year honorees worldwide to receive this honor.

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J.J. Gembinski

J.J. Gembinski brought his first team to FLL in 2016. Along with his co-coach, J.J. worked with that team from FLL Explore (formerly FLL Jr.) through an additional four seasons of Challenge. After his team aged out, he volunteered to join *FIRST* Long Island leadership and participate in FLL from a different perspective. J.J. looks forward to working with coaches, school districts, and his colleagues to bring Explore to future generations of teams.

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Troy Douglas

Troy Douglas is a project engineer designing industrial automation systems for the past eight years while working for Festo. He is a *FIRST* Robotics Competition Alumnus from Team 270, the "Falcons" from Deer Park High School. He has been involved with helping to plan and execute *FIRST* LEGO League, *FIRST* Tech Challenge, and *FIRST* Robotics Competition as a volunteer and development council member dating back to 2007 and was a mentor for *FIRST* LEGO League from 2003 to 2007. His previous role for *FIRST* LEGO League was regional head referee. For the *FIRST* Robotics Competition, he is a head referee and has volunteered out of state, internationally and at the *FIRST* Championship for a number of years.

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Annabelle May

Annabelle is a former teacher and current International Student Services Manager who has been working in education for over eight years. She has simultaneously worked as a freelance editor for over 13 years. Annabelle has been a *FIRST* Long Island volunteer since 2010, beginning as a Project Judge for *FIRST* LEGO League. After many years with FLL, in 2019 she added judging for *FIRST* Tech Challenge, before becoming a Judge Advisor for FTC in 2020. In addition to her time volunteering, Annabelle is a proud *FIRST* Long Island alumna, having competed as an original member of one of Long Island's early FLL teams, Team #7 Congobots. When not dealing in robot-related activities, Annabelle is a keen reader, knitter, and consumer of any trivia-based show.

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Marin Kobin

Marin Kobin is a systems engineer who has been working with the Navy and Marine Corps for the past thirteen years. She recently graduated from a selective leadership program through work and added to her technical work by also becoming a supervisor. She is a *FIRST* Robotics Competition alumna from Team #1468, the "J-Birds" from Hicksville High School. After high school, she went on to coach and volunteer across the *FIRST* progression of programs in the Finger Lakes, Chesapeake and Long Island regions during and after college.

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Caryn Meirs

Caryn Meirs is a high school special education science teacher and recently earned her doctorate in education. Caryn moved with her FLL team to the fledgling NYC-Long Island FTC season and helped the team grow into a successful multi-team FTC club. She is awestruck at the opportunity to be volunteering for *FIRST* Long Island again — especially with the FTC program. At home, she lives with her two dogs and competes in agility and obedience on weekends without robotics.

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Larry Toonkel

Upon his retirement in 2015, Larry Toonkel joined the *FIRST* Long Island (formerly School-Business Partnerships of Long Island, Inc.) development council and served as a judge at the Long Island Regional *FIRST* Robotics Competitions. He was named co-director of the development council in 2017. In 2022, he became the council's sole director following the retirement of David Johnson.

Larry always had a love of science and technology and his career shows it. He worked for the Atomic Energy Commission, the U.S. Department of Energy and a small technology company involved in cell phones. In addition, he spent 30 years at Northrop Grumman, where he held various managerial and supervisory positions related to project management, software engineering and process engineering. He also served as the lead process engineer of the Enterprise Services Sector, ensuring that the systems were built in accordance with defined standard processes. It was his time at Northrop Grumman when he became interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives.

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Inspiring Students to Pursue Careers in Science, Technology, Engineering & Math

ABOUT *FIRST*® LONG ISLAND

FIRST® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Long Island is a fully volunteer-run 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with the goal to enable students to find their passion, while preparing them for the challenges facing the 21st-century workforce.

FIRST Long Island evolved from School-Business Partnerships of Long Island (SBPLI). In 1984, Frederick Breithut had the vision and foresight to recognize the need to develop partnerships between local high schools and businesses. His goal was to provide students with practical experience and curriculum development, while helping the business community develop its future workforce, which resulted in the formation of over 100 partnerships. To further this mission, in 1999, SBPLI partnered with *FIRST* to administer and bring *FIRST* Robotics Competition (FRC) to Long Island. The Long Island robotics program featured just eight FRC high school teams culminating in the inaugural FRC Regional event. Since then, the FRC Long Island Regional has grown to two events with over 80 teams consisting of over 2,000 students competing each year. *FIRST* Long Island also hosts the *FIRST* LEGO League programs, in which over 2,000 elementary and middle school students from Nassau and Suffolk Counties take part each year. In 2016, the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge was added to its roster of programs, roughly impacting another 500 students on Long Island.

Now doing business as *FIRST* Long Island, the organization seeks to expand its impact by strengthening relationships with students, volunteers, and sponsors while helping to connect students and alumni to internship and job opportunities. *FIRST* Long Island continues to use robots as the vehicle to “build students“ and prepare them for the future.

For more information about the programs, find out about volunteering, or to learn how to become a sponsor, visit www.firstlongisland.org



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