

NOTEBOOK

Robotics to aid the elderly

Teams from Rocky Point and Bayport were named Long Island's best earlier this month in a competition using LEGOs to solve challenges that senior citizens face on a daily basis.

Radical Robotix of Rocky Point Middle School and the Lion Bots of Academy Street Elementary School in Bayport won the champion's first-place and second-place awards, respectively, at the FIRST LEGO League Long Island Championship Tournament at Longwood High School in Middle Island. FIRST stands for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.

Forty-two teams — with some 400 students ages 9 to 14 — competed in this year's challenge, "Senior Solutions." Participants used LEGO Mindstorms pieces to design robots that could handle tasks seniors face, such as retrieving pill bottles and reaching switches.

"I have a brilliant and talented team that have all worked very hard to get where they are," Rocky Point coach Mark Moorman said. "We've been meeting multiple times a week since September, even four times over midwinter break."

For the challenge's project portion, Rocky Point proposed a wrist-worn device that monitors a senior's vital signs and



Academy Street Elementary School's team in Bayport won second place in the recent FIRST LEGO League Long Island Championship Tournament in Middle Island; 42 teams competed.

communicates with a medicine dispenser at appropriate times. Bayport proposed a touch-screen device that operates a calendar, dispenser and radio-frequency identification tags to locate eyeglasses and dentures.

Rocky Point advances to the FIRST LEGO League World Festival in St. Louis on April 24-27 and is raising \$15,000 to help fund the trip. Bayport will compete at LEGoland in California on May 17-19.

The local tournament was sponsored by School-Business Partnerships of Long Island.