

MEDIA ADVISORY

BUILDING LEGO ROBOTS OR BUILDING SCIENTISTS?

Event Announcement

Montclair JFLL & FLL Qualifying Tournament featuring the JFLL (Jr. First Lego League Ages 6-9) from the 2008 RAND Elementary School Team: "Rand Lego Lightning Machines" – Montclair, NJ

Project Theme: Climate Connections

Event to be held: Sat. Dec. 6th, 2008 Mt. Hebron Middle School Gym – 173 Bellevue Ave. Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

JFLL Presentation: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

FLL Competitions: 9 am - 5 pm (First Lego League Ages 10-14)

Rand JFLL Team Members: Mikael, Miles, Amit, Oscar, Leo, Spencer, Benjamin, Andre

Coach: Ms. Monique Dituri – MHS Chemistry Teacher & Robotics Mentor MHS Mentors for JFLL: Jen, Zach, Sam, of FIRST Robotics Team 555

Sponsors: F.I.R.S.T. (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science & Technology), M.F.E.E. & Montclair Board of Education

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ABOUT MONTCLAIR JUNIOR FIRST LEGO LEAGUE

Building robots out of Lego's or building future scientists?

The JFLL (Junior First Lego League) team made of kids in first – third grade (ages 6-9) from Rand Elementary School will display their problem solving Lego models alongside their older counterparts during the local FLL (First Lego League) qualifying regional robotics tournament.

The 2008 season JFLL theme presented by the national non-profit F.I.R.S.T. organization (for inspiration and recognition of science and technology) is "Climate Connections". The season started Sept. 5th 2008 and runs through April 2009.

One of six statewide yearly FLL events, the Montclair tournament will be held in the gym at Montclair's Mt. Hebron Middle School located at 173 Bellevue Ave. Upper Montclair, NJ 07043 on Saturday Dec. 6th 2008. The tournament will run from 9 am - 5 pm with free admission to the public. A free-form Lego sculpture will be built by the over 300 participants and the public is encouraged to bring their extra Legos as well. JFLL portion of the event will happen between 11:00 am-12:00 noon. The tournament will feature 24 teams from Northern and Central New Jersey. 5 Teams from Montclair will compete from the 3 middle schools: Glenfield (1), Mt. Hebron (1), and Renaissance (3).

Members of the JFLL elementary school team members are self professed "Lego Maniacs" who participate in the loosely organized and non-competitive JFLL through after school enrichment programs funded through the individual school PTA and the children's own families.

The children in the JFLL teams build their creations under the guidance of a mentor. They use individually purchased kits from the Lego's Mindstorms NXT which feature electric motors to power moving parts, a battery power supply, solar panels, sound and light sensors, gears, pulleys, axles, wheels and much more. Regular Lego bricks are also used.

The children are asked to design their "robot" models with the problem solving concept of First's yearly scientific theme (2008/2009 theme is Climate Connections) The team is required to make some sort of "robot/model" featuring a simple machine with at least one moving part (motorized or hand move-able) on a 15"x15" base. They also participate in team building skills and create a "Show Me" poster displaying their team concepts.

The JFLL team will show their creations in a non-competitive fashion on the same day as the older kids (FLL) qualifying tournament. Volunteer adult "judges" from the local science and teaching community will review JFLL (and FLL) teams presenting at qualifying tournament events.

There is no actual competition in the JFLL only team innovation, creativity, pride and energy! Each JFLL team member will be participating in High Five ceremony and be presented an award certificate of participation.

The Rand Elementary School (which is known for it's Environmental Science Magnet) hosts the Montclair JFLL team as part of its after school enrichment programs. The Rand "little kids" team self-named, Lightning Lego Machines is mentored by Montclair High School's chemistry teacher Monique Dituri. Monique is also the long time coach of the extremely popular championship MHS robotics team.

The youngest Rand team member Leo Sarubin announced that he was building a robot that he was calling "The Super Air Cooler – our robot to fight global warming" that moves by four sound sensor powered motors that respond when spoken to. Leo's mom/teacher said that while Leo's "robot" may not actually

solve global warming (or do anything at all!) he loves messing around with the Lego robotics kits and has had a great time making new friends with similar interests.

The Rand JFLL team project will be "A wind powered museum with water collector and radar screen to look for future weather". In actuality this is a Lego house with a human powered Lego windmill.

There are approximately 20 JFLL teams and 250 FLL teams operating in state of NJ. The FLL and the JFLL organization are coordinated in NJ by volunteer committees from the science and technology and educational community. The NJ FLL Planning Committee includes, Committee Chairman Ernest DiCicco, Andrea Blake Garrett of Jersey City Public Schools, Leleve Burr-Alexander, NJIT, David Jean – Cyber Robotics Learning, and NJ First Regional Director, Randy Schaeffer.

JFLL teams will present at local FLL qualifying tournaments around the state of NJ include events in Montclair, Newark, Jersey City, Metuchen, Hillsborough, Mt. Olive and others) The NJ FLL Championship Tournament is on Dec. 15th 2008 in Mt. Olive, NJ (at Mount Olive High School). The winners from the NJ tournament will compete at the World Championship in Atlanta in April 2009. NJ has done very well at the World Championship over the last two years with teams placing either first or second in a variety of categories competing against teams from the 50 states and around the world.

www.nycnjfirst.org

www.montclairrobotics.org

www.usfirst.org

www.legoeducation.com

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Randy Schaeffer – FLL Regional Director (908) 412-1117

Models Created:

1) "A wind powered museum with water collector and radar screen for future weather"

A building with a moving windmill that moves by blowing on it (human powered) - worked on by Mikael, Miles and Amit

2) "The super power air cooler – our robot to fight global warming"

Moves by 4 air (sound sensor) powered motors that respond when spoken to. It was made to follow a path using sound to guide it.

Model worked on by: Leo, Oscar, Spencer, Ben & Andre

3) "An ecologically friendly smart car"

Model is battery powered and was worked on by the team

What is Jr.FLL?

Junior FIRST LEGO League (Jr.FLL) is an exciting opportunity for the youngest budding scientists. It encompasses the core concepts of all FIRST programs to inspire, excite, and introduce kids to the wonders of science, technology, and engineering.

Jr.FLL

- * Teaches the benefits of teamwork
- * Sparks initial interest in science and technology
- * Introduces basic design skills through a hands-on approach with the familiarity and fun of LEGO building
- * Provides a culture of sharing and learning from others

The goal of Jr.FLL is to provide an experience that will capture young children's inherent curiosity and creativity and direct it toward discovering the possibilities of improving the world around them through understanding, thought, planning, and technology.

