

March 2015

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BLOG
by Dan Green

Dan's blog may be found on the Illinois FIRST [website](#). Any questions on Illinois FIRST programs or events may be directed to Dan at dgreen@usfirst.org.



ILLINOIS FIRST SOCIAL MEDIA

We encourage teams to develop a positive Facebook and Twitter presence. Please have FTC or FRC in your handle/username, so it is easy for everyone to find you. Social media is about growing communities, and connections. The ability to use social media positively is one of the 21st century skills.

IL FIRST OUTREACH @ MSI

The Museum of Science and Industry will be hosting their 5th annual Robot Block Party in celebration of National Robotics Week. MSI has requested that FLL, FTC and FRC teams show off their robots at 1 of these 3 days ... April 4, April 11 or April 12. Team applications are due by March 6. The link may be found [here](#).

IL FIRST HELPS RONALD MCDONALD CHARITIES

All programs in FIRST throughout Illinois have the opportunity to partner with the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Simply have your team collect aluminum tabs (soda, juice, adult beverage, or energy drink) from home, family, friends, and school year round. Collected tabs may be turned in at expos, qualifiers, tournaments and regionals. We will convert the soda tabs into cash and present a check to the Ronald McDonald House Charities.



There are several upcoming events for this year's Jr.FLL season in Illinois:

- 3/14 – Naperville Exhibit, Naperville
- 3/21 – SW Expo @ SW'ern IL College, Belleville

- 4/11 – Celebration at Raupp Museum, Buffalo Grove
- 4/12 – Central IL Expo – Lincoln Land Comm. College, Springfield

Registration details may be found [here](#). We now have 135 Jr.FLL teams registered in Illinois. Specific questions may be directed to our Illinois Jr.FLL program partner, Mary Buchanan, at jrFLL-contact@ILfirst.org.



Many of the award winners from the Championship tournaments in Illinois will be travelling to compete at post season events. The HIPPIES and RoboPop, the 1st Place Champions will be attending World Festival in St. Louis in April. The 2nd Place Champion's award winners, The Fuzzy Pink Bunnies of Doom and the Lovely Lego Ladies will travel to the US North American Open at LEGOLAND in Carlsbad, California in May. The Thinkinators from East Peoria will attend the FLL Razorback Invitational in Fayetteville, Arkansas and the Newton Busters have been given a slot at the FLL Asia Pacific Open in Sydney, Australia. We wish all of these teams the best of luck at their events and are very excited to have them represent Illinois!

Specific questions may be directed to our Illinois FLL program partner, Diane Michalczuk, at contactfllillinois@gmail.com.



The Illinois State FTC Championship was held February 21. Eight teams will be moving on to the Northern Super Regionals, March 26-28. Congratulations to all the teams, their coaches & mentors. Check out the results [here](#). During the awards ceremony, Illinois FTC announced the State's Dean's List Finalists: Christopher Laker and Hannah Lightner. Their nominations now move to a national review committee. National winners will be announced at Worlds. Congratulations to all of our Illinois Dean's List nominees.

This season we saw great growth in volunteerism among our teams and communities. Thank you, and let's carry that into the 2015-16 season. The Illinois 2014-15

Cascade Effect season may be finished, but now is a great time for teams to connect with the public through outreach events around the state. Several organizations have contacted us requesting FTC demos. Help us make it loud. Check out this list of [events](#).

Specific questions may be directed to either of our Illinois FTC program partners: Sue Kunzeman at FTC-contact@ILfirst.org or Jonathan Weiland at jwFTCil@gmail.com.



FIRST® Robotics Competition



With the lack of feedback from Chairman's interviews this year, teams may find it useful to use the FIRST FTC Team Judging Session Self-Reflection form, which may be found [here](#).

The Central IL Regional (CIR) will be held March 19-21 at the Renaissance Coliseum at Bradley University in Peoria. All the details may be found [here](#). Contact the CIR chair and the volunteer coordinator at frccir2014@gmail.com

The Midwest Regional (MWR) will be held April 2-4 at the University of Illinois Chicago Pavilion. All details may be found [here](#). Contact info for MWR: gasmith@uic.edu and volunteer coordinator: dj_npta@yahoo.com.



SENIOR MENTOR CORNER

The Senior Mentor Corner is a potpourri of events and activities that may be of interest to teams or students of our Illinois *FIRST* teams. Some information will be directly from *FIRST* HQ. Other events/activities may not necessarily be sanctioned functions of *FIRST* or *FIRST* ILLINOIS but may be of general interest to our teams regarding fun events, fundraising, etc.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

A new robot movie, CHAPPIE, will be released March 6. Contact your local movie theatre to arrange for your team to set up a demo for the opening weekend. The trailer may be viewed [here](#).

VIDEO CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

Create a 2-3 minute video focused on how you think robots could make a difference and how you want them

to change our lives. Win a trip to the DARPA Robotics Challenge Finals in California. Details may be found [here](#). Deadline is April 1.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Chicago area scholarship from the Society of Women Engineers is for female seniors that plan to pursue engineering or computer science in the Fall of 2015. Deadline is April 10. The application may be found [here](#). Additional SWE scholarships may be found [here](#). Colleges, universities, professional associations, and corporations offer college scholarships to participants on *FIRST* FTC and FRC teams. Millions of dollars are available to our students. *FIRST* scholarship information may be found [here](#).

ROTARY AND SLINGSHOT

This year Rotary International was featured in the Rose Bowl Parade with a float that promoted clean water around the world. Rotary and Dean Kamen's invention, SlingShot, share the goal of distributing clean water to the millions of people who need it. Teams may want to consider contacting your local Rotary Club to work together on this global challenge. Perhaps your local Rotary Club would support your team's showing of the SlingShot movie.

LEARN PYTHON ONLINE -- FREE

A free online course from the University of Michigan aims to teach everyone to learn the basics of programming computers using Python. The course has no pre-reqs and avoids all but the simplest mathematics. Anyone with moderate computer experience should be able to master the materials in this course. Class starts in June and more info may be found [here](#).

We encourage team mentors to share this newsletter with other mentors, parents, students, and sponsors so everyone knows what is happening throughout Illinois for all FIRST programs. The newsletter is posted each month on the IL FIRST [website](#).

Diane Cabiness, FIRST Senior Mentor – Illinois

DCabiness@usfirst.org

Twitter: @DCabiness

Facebook: Diane Cabiness [profile pic FIRST logo]

www.ILFIRST.org