



Some of the members of Team Phoenix are shown at the Granite State District Competition, where they came in third. From left are Colin Bewley, Ian Ayer, Nic Molica, Michael Sweeney, Teia Cestrone, Isaac George, Ben Nichols-Farquhar, Kurtis Duggan, Aditya Paten and Jeremy Rojas.

Sunday, March 8, 2015

## Team Phoenix excels at FIRST Robotics event at Nashua South

Last weekend, several Academy for Science and Design students participated in the annual *FIRST* Robotics Competition at Nashua High School South with Team Phoenix, or FRC Team 2342.

Even though there are many clubs at ASD, one club our school does not have is an FRC team. ASD students do not need to create a team because we have FRC Team 2342, Team Phoenix, which is based out of Daniel Webster College in Nashua. About half of the students on the team are from ASD, while the rest are home-schooled or from other schools in the area without FRC teams.

Team Phoenix has a special community made up of students from throughout southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts. The community is much different from those of other FRC teams because it is more student driven.

Many FRC teams are run by mentors who do a lot of the work while the students learn by watching the mentors. In Team Phoenix robotics, the students do most of the work, from using computer-aided design and building the robot to wiring and coding the robot.

The fundraising and organizing are also done by the students, with little or no help from mentors. The mentors guide Team Phoenix members by teaching students new skills and ensuring safety at all times.

On Friday-Saturday, Feb. 27-28, Team Phoenix competed in the Granite State District Event at Nashua High School South, earning second place in qualifiers and third in the playoffs. This was a vast improvement compared with last year.

"Initially, I think many of the members of the team who had attended the competition last year had low expectations," ASD student Bryce Stack said. "After the first few qualification matches, the returning members thought, 'Hey! We're in it to win it.'"

Along with doing well in the competition, Connor Tess, of Team Phoenix and ASD, scored the most "litter" points in the nation during the first week. "Litter" points are scored by throwing pool noodles onto the opponent's side of the field.

"It was nice to have my team be a big part of the physical game," Tess said. "I was glad I could help my team score a lot of points, especially in the first few qualifying rounds. It definitely brought up our overall score in the competition."

Team Phoenix also won the UL Industrial Safety Award for demonstrating safety in and out of FRC.

"It was exciting when we were called down to the awards area," said ASD's Liam Gousious, the safety captain of Team 2342. "It felt like a really big accomplishment because I achieved something I really wanted to and put a lot of time and hard work into."

Gousious also won the Star of the Day award for safety, making it the second year in a row for him.

Team Phoenix looks forward to the next competition in a few weeks at the University of New Hampshire. The team is hoping to score well in hopes of making it to St. Louis for the world competition.

**Ian Ayer is a freshman at the Academy for Science and Design in Nashua.**