



## **Northwood, Creekside middle schools robotics teams win trophies in state First Lego League competition**

Robotics teams from both Woodstock Community Unit School District 200 middle schools took home trophies from the First Lego League state competition tackling real world problems of space travel and programming their robots to perform a series of tasks.

The Apollo XVIII team from Creekside Middle School and Space Squad team from Northwood Middle School placed at a Dec. 8 event hosted at Northwood where they competed against 14 other teams from NMS, CMS and neighboring school districts.

Their scores allowed them to advance to state Jan. 19 at Elgin Community College where they competed among dozens of teams from Chicago and across northern Illinois sharing their skills and the results of their preparation and research.

“Space Squad, along with Creekside team, were the best version of D 200 students. Although it was a competition with 48 teams in attendance, you could find both middle schools cheering for each other all day at the robot performance tables,” said Gigi Carlson, gifted coordinator and Northwood team coach.

This year’s First Lego League challenge theme was “Into Orbit.” The Space Squad took on the issue of astronauts experiencing ear problems during space travel while Apollo XVIII developed a light to combat the loss of Vitamin D that astronauts experience while on extended missions.

After a long day of competition in Elgin, Creekside’s team was awarded the trophy for Best Robot Design: Innovation & Strategy while the Northwood team won the trophy for Best Project: Research.

“It is the first time for Woodstock that two different teams, from two different schools, have won a state level trophy in two different categories. We are immensely proud of everyone’s efforts,” Carlson said.

Kristina Hermansson, gifted coordinator at Creekside and coach of the Apollo XVIII team, said she was thrilled for both teams and amazed by their success at state.

“What a wonderful group of kids. They worked so hard, cooperating, learning from each other. As a teacher, it’s really a joy to see those efforts pay off,” Hermansson said.

In addition to the trophy, the Space Squad team was asked to perform its presentation to the entire cheering crowd of more than 1,500 at Elgin Community College.

Students competing on District 200 robotics teams participate as part of their schools’ Challenge Corps program for gifted students.

The Northwood Space Squad team members include: Alex Azarela, A.J. Bigler, Bob Gerloff, Will Madigan, Claire Miranda, Teya Nieman, Ryan Nolan, Emerich Parpart, Malaika Parpart and A.J. Ringpis.

Members of Creekside’s Apollo XVII members are: Adeline Arana, Javier Benito, Isabella Kozlow, Jackson Lyons, Daniel Mugica, Vincent Perez, Kathleen Thomas and Alisha Virani.



**Creekside Middle School's Apollo XVIII team** won the state trophy for Best Robot Design: Innovation & Strategy at the First Lego League competition Jan. 19 at Elgin Community College.

**Team members are: (L to R)** Kathleen Thomas, Alisha Virani, Vincent Perez, Jackson Lyons, Javier Benito, Daniel Mugica, Adeline Arana and Isabella Kozlow. The team is coached by Kristina Hermansson.



**Northwood Middle School's Space Squad team** won the state trophy for Best Project: Research at the First Lego League competition Jan. 19 at Elgin Community College.

**Team members are: (Front L to R)** Ryan Nolan, Emerich Partpart, Will Madigan, Claire Miranda, AJ Bigler (Back L to R) Team coach Gigi Carlson, Alex Azarela, Bob Gerloff, Malaika Parpart, AJ Ringpis and Teya Nieman.



**Alisha Virani and Vince Perez**, 8th-graders at Creekside Middle School, test their robot skills at the performance tables Jan. 19 at the First Lego League State robotics competition at Elgin Community College as coach **Kristina Hermansson** cheers them on.