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New Braunfels FIRST Tech Challenge Team Wins Judges' Award at Asia Pacific World Festival

New Braunfels, Texas -- Field Destruction, the FIRST Tech Challenge robotics team sponsored by the Friends of the New Braunfels Public Library, returned from the Asia Pacific World Festival competition in Sydney, Australia with the Judges' Award. This is a special award given by the judging panel to a team whose unique efforts, performance or dynamics during the course of the competition merit recognition. The judging panel selects a team to be honored, as well as the actual name of the award, based on their observations. The judges named the award the "Good Onya" award, saying that "Good Onya" is the Australian way to say "You have a lot of heart."

The team displayed heart from the first day of the competition, when they discovered that some of the parts on their robot were not allowed in the competition. Hinges, a bobbin, and a bungee cord were considered pre-manufactured parts and had to be replaced by parts the team made themselves. The team had only a few hours to find supplies and make those parts in order for their robot to pass inspection and be cleared to compete. Thanks to a generous maintenance worker at the team's hotel who had the needed supplies, the team made the switches and was cleared to compete.

"Although they did not advance to the finals of the robot game, the team received excellent ratings for their robot design, creativity, communication skills, and professionalism," said Kit Ward-Crixell, Youth Services Librarian. "They impressed the judges and their competition with the amount of progress they have made in only their first year."

Other highlights of the event included a Women in Engineering tea, in which female competitors were able to interact with engineers from Google Australia, and a Friendship Night in which teams from around the world performed to highlight their cultures. Field Destruction member Sam Flynn rocked the house with his electronic music and shared the stage with teams performing tai chi, capoeira, and traditional Indian songs.

The Field Destruction members who competed in Australia are Matthew D'Avanzo, Sam Flynn, Lili Haus, and Kyle Spinks. Their coaches are Bill D'Avanzo and Mario Guzman.

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