

## News release



**Jan. 6, 2015**

For more information:

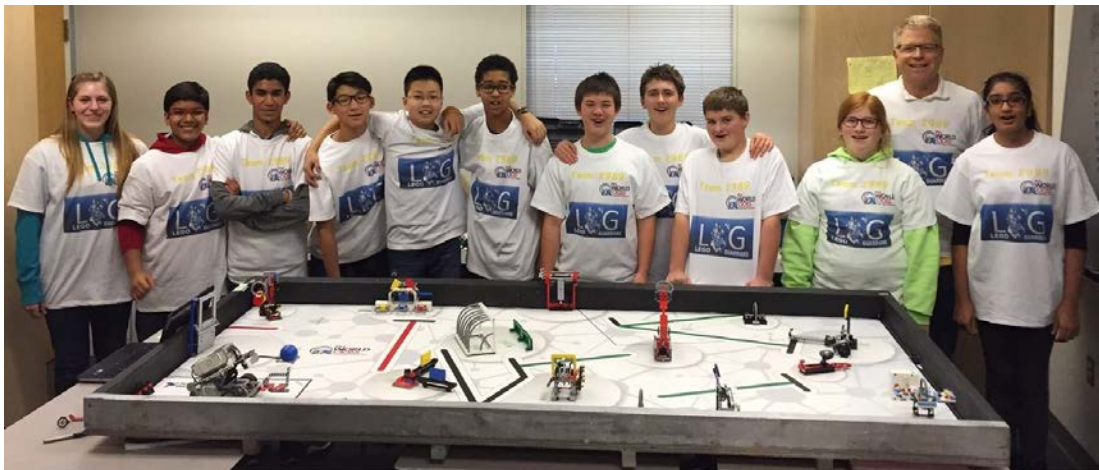
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### **Here come the robots! Gateway Middle School wins top trophy**

*December competition included teams from 13 of the district's schools*



Above, the justifiably proud *Gateway Guardians* stand behind their mission board after taking the Grand Champion award at the regional [First Lego League](#) competition in Shoreline.

North Middle School's *NERDS who Say Ni!* took third in the robot challenge, advanced to the semifinals and brought home the Gracious Professionalism trophy. The NERD's coach, Christine Phippard, reported, "A judge told me they had never heard a team get mentioned by so many other teams during core values judging." Among the core values emphasized in the Lego competitions is the spirit of collaboration and partnership; the North team impressed everyone with their willingness to help others and work together.

Just before Winter Break, the district sent teams from half of its 26 schools to compete in Shoreline. The district's 13 teams made up more than one third of the 32 regional teams who took part in the three different challenges of the day. Seven of those teams

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were first-time competitors in the world of robotics. District teams were from Eisenhower, Gateway, Heatherwood and North middle schools and Garfield, Hawthorne, Lowell, Monroe, View Ridge and Whittier elementary schools.

The first of the three events took place on a “mission board.” Robots on the board had to accurately complete tasks to earn points. The tasks included such actions as opening doors, kicking soccer balls and picking up objects. Each robotic move was programmed by students to do as many of these tasks as possible in two-and-a-half suspense-filled minutes.

In another event, students made brief presentations on an investigative question that provided insight on a local or world problem of particular interest to each of them.

The last part of the competition is always a surprise. Students worked in teams to solve an unknown challenge. How they work together to reach a solution is as important as the end result.

Jessica Murphy, Eisenhower’s seventh grade robotics and computer science teacher, coaches the school’s robotics team. She was proud of the fledgling team’s results in Shoreline, although they did not bring home a trophy this first year. “I’m already planning to get an early start next fall,” she said. She also noted how pleased her team was to be present when the Gateway team got its championship trophy, “We were there when Gateway won the trophy for the Regional Champs! They rocked it, and my team thought it was awesome that they are moving on!”

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### **Artsy robot!**

Third-grader Aubrey of Lowell Elementary has also caught robot fever.

Aubrey’s street cleaning robot is one of dozens of art projects on display through Jan. 15 at the [Community Resource Center](#). The [PTA Reflections](#) art show feature’s students’ interpretations of the prompt, “*The world would be a better place if ...*” Aubrey detailed her conviction that the world would be better if happy robots kept our streets clean.

