

Education

Lego League team wins 3 trophies at tournament

On Saturday, Dec. 5, the Brickheads Lego League team competed against twenty four teams and won three trophies at the First Lego League tournament at Sinclair: the ambassador award, robot performance, and robot programming. Comprised of five Oakwood students and one student from Xenia, the Brickheads are now headed to the STATE tournament at the Nutter Center held on Feb. 6-7. The Brickheads have been studying texting and driving as part of the Lego League "Smart Moves" transportation challenge, and they have a patent pending on their device, which will help drivers keep their eyes on the road instead of their phones.

Besides presenting their ideas to the tournament judges, the Brickheads

also traveled to Columbus to discuss their innovative solution to the office of State Senator Jon Husted. The State of Ohio is currently considering several bills to solve the texting and driving problem, so the team's visit was very timely. They also presented their ideas to the Ohio Director of Public Safety (ODPS), Cathy Collins Taylor, and members of Ohio Traffic Safety, Ohio State Highway Patrol, Ohio Department of Transportation, and other related department heads at the Ohio Department of Public Safety Building.

On the 90-minute drive to Columbus, the team members counted the number of distracted drivers (all types of distractions) and were surprised by the total of 400. In other research, they found that Ohio had

6,000 deaths last year caused by distracted driving. Drivers have a false sense of their ability to text while driving, but the odds of being in a car accident while texting is twice as high as a non-distracted driver. The average text message takes five seconds and a car traveling 65 mph will travel 500 feet in that time, so the potential for serious accidents is very high as confirmed by a team interview with a state trooper.

The Brickheads posted an informational video on You Tube that promotes their device and discourages texting while driving (www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHvUkmzZbws). So far the site has had 95 hits and the team hopes that they are getting the word out about the dangers of texting while driving.



Brickhead team members L-R: Nick Hensley, Henry Fulford, Ian Campbell, Andrew Hensley, Ryan Lapchynski, and Walker Berwald. Nick, Henry, Ian, and Walker are 6th graders at E.D. Smith Elementary. Andrew is a 7th grader at Oakwood Jr High, and Ryan is a 5th grader at Pathway School of Discovery. The Brickheads are coached by Vicki Campbell, Greg Flaute, and Doug Lapchynski.



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