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High School Robotics Team from San Diego Wins Highest Award at Annual *FIRST* World Championship in St. Louis

10,000+ Students From Around the World Put Custom-Built Robots to the Test and The Holy Cows from San Diego Win *FIRST* Robotics Most Prestigious Award

San Diego, CA April 30, 2013 — This past weekend, more than 10,000 students from around the globe travelled to St. Louis, Mo., to put their engineering skills to the test at the annual [FIRST](#)[®] (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Championship, held at the Edward Jones Dome. In front of a crowd of 25,000 fans, The Holy Cows *FIRST* Robotics Team 1538 from High Tech High in San Diego, were presented with the highest honor of the Championship by entering the *FIRST* Hall of Fame as Chairman's Award winners.

They were also Divisional Finalists at the World Championship for their robot performance in this year's game, [ULTIMATE ASCENT](#)SM, where life sized robots try to score as many flying discs into their goals as possible during the two-minute and 15-second match. This year, 2,546 *FIRST* Robotics teams in 17 countries participated in 77 Regional and District competitions.

A not-for-profit organization founded in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen, *FIRST* inspires young people's interest and participation in science and technology through massive "Varsity Sport for the Mind" events. At the three day championship level robotics event, celebrities like will.i.am, Emma Dumont and Dean Kamen cheered on young innovators from 37 countries as their robots took the playing field. Pop superstar will.i.am shared thoughts on his massive volunteer efforts with *FIRST* by saying, "I'm proud to help *FIRST* inspire young people to pursue science and technology careers. The experience that students gain and the values they learn in *FIRST* programs are crucial to creating the innovative problem solvers of tomorrow."

The Chairman's Award, won by [The Holy Cows](#), is the *FIRST* Robotics Competition's most prestigious award a team can win. It is given to the team that best demonstrates the greatest commitment to spreading passion about science and technology and honors the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of *FIRST*. The Chairman's Award helps keep the central focus of the *FIRST* Robotics Competition on the goal of inspiring greater levels of respect and honor for science and technology.

After winning five consecutive regional Chairman's Awards at the San Diego *FIRST* Robotics Regional, The Holy Cows have now joined the *FIRST* Hall of Fame as *FIRST* World Championship Chairman's Award winners by bringing about culture change on a massive scale. Manager of Awards for The Holy Cows, Carmel Fiscko, shared what it was like to win Chairman's. "Winning this award was quite possibly the proudest and happiest moment of my life. I still can't believe it. It's the first time I put so much of myself into working for a goal. It paid off in a way that has changed my life."

The Holy Cows know that *FIRST* is more than just building robots. They've shown that it's about transforming our culture. They have worked tirelessly to inspire a fascination for science, technology, engineering, and math, and to drive our community's culture to treasure it as well. Their [Chairman's Award video](#) demonstrates how they've worked towards this goal.

They've worked to change the culture of education by supporting other robotics teams through mentoring 47 robotics teams, providing workshops and developing resources like CowTips, creating a robotics scouting app called CowScout, providing a Mobile Machine Shop at California robotics events, hosting qualifying tournaments and off season events, and building a robotics center where San Diego teams work and practice. They have presented to the San Diego City school board on the importance of *FIRST*, created robotics elective classes at their school and piloted easy hands on science activities to get students in other schools and classes excited about science.

They've nurtured culture change in our community through strong relationships with sponsors like Qualcomm, SAIC and Nordson Asymtek. They've attending over 23 conferences in past 3 years and created mutually beneficial partnerships with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) organizations. Working with local mayors, councilmembers and state officials, they've raised the level of STEM awareness in our community through proclamations and partnerships. Through news stations, newspapers, and social media, they've been able to demonstrate *FIRST* to 4.4 million people in the past three years. They've given back to our local community by volunteering nearly 21,000 community service hours since 2009, raised over \$5000 for cancer research and collected over 1,000 lbs of food since 2011.

Most importantly their work to change the culture of students and their school is seen in the fact that 100% of The Holy Cows alumni attend college while 95% pursue a career in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The Holy Cows Director of Public Relations, Kaithlyn Abulencia, explains how *FIRST* helped her overcome depression and worrying about her future. "*FIRST* and The Holy Cows is much more than just engineering and building robots. Through The Holy Cows, I've built a passion, a family, and a support system. I've found something I can put all my time, effort, and energy into. Thanks to *FIRST* and The Holy Cows, I have a set path for my future pursuing a career in mechanical engineering."

About *FIRST*:

Accomplished inventor [Dean Kamen](#) founded *FIRST*® (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With support from three out of every five Fortune 500 companies and nearly \$15 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the [FIRST®Robotics Competition](#) (FRC®) and [FIRST®Tech Challenge](#) (FTC®) for high-school students, [FIRST®LEGO® League](#) (FLL®) for 9 to 14-year-olds, (9 to 16-year-olds outside the U.S. and Canada) and [Junior FIRST®LEGO® League](#) (Jr.FLL®) for 6 to 9-year-olds. Gracious Professionalism™ is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org.

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