

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EDUHSD Robotics Team Receives Grant from NASA

The EDUHSD robotics team, Circuit Breakers 3189, recently received a grant from NASA to fund their entry fee to the Sacramento Regional FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) that is scheduled for March 24-26 at UC Davis. The robotics program was established during the 2009-10 school year as an opportunity for students to get involved in engineering, computer science and leadership. While the program is housed at and supported by the Virtual Academy in El Dorado, team members consist of students from the Virtual Academy as well as El Dorado, Union Mine, Ponderosa and Oak Ridge high schools.

"Students learn invaluable skills by their participation in FRC," Patricia Ferrell, Team Advisor, said.

"Students design the robot using SolidWorks® computer aided software, fabricate parts, construct the robot, design and assemble the electrical system, program the computer controls, and remotely drive the robot. In addition, students raise funds, design and maintain the website, prepare a business plan and manage the finances. More importantly, they also learn teamwork, mentorship, leadership, work ethic, respect for each other and adults, and gracious professionalism. Robotics provides an opportunity for students to build character essential to their future success."

In addition to Ferrell, the team is guided by lead mentor Adam Reif, an aerospace engineer working for Pumpkin, Inc.; and adult mentors Karl Van Dyke, an engineer with 40 years of experience; Jay Rutten, a computer programmer; James Womack, a current CSU Sacramento student and Team 3189 alumnus; Kelly Kahling, who brings ten years work experience as an actuary; Matt Braley, an electrical engineer who worked for NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory on robotics spacecraft; Bryan Van Meter, who works for Kinetic Machining Services; and additional Team 3189 alumni Avery Hughes, Chris Rutten and Devlyn Nelson.

Team 3189 was one of 42 teams nationwide who received the Sustaining Growth Grant through the NASA Robotics Alliance Project. With this, their entry to the Sacramento Regional FRC is taken care of and focus can shift to the team's robot— in hopes of a regional win.

"Robotics contributes to the district's goals for student-centered education by allowing students to experience a rigorous hands-on learning environment that prepares them for advanced education options, future employment, and post-secondary education. Students learn to analyze and evaluate information, think creatively, problem solve, and work in a team setting to reach a common goal. By working on the robot and competing in FIRST, students solve challenging problems by learning and applying academic skills consistent with real world expectations, standards and knowledge. Past students have gone on to intern at engineering firms, and attend college in the fields of engineering, mechatronics (mechanical engineering, electronics, computer science), and computer programming," Ferrell said.

In addition to the NASA grant, the team has also recently received \$1,000 from the Sierra Pacific Foundation, \$3,000 from Cal-Pacific Roofing Incorporated, and several other sponsorships/donations to be used for supplies and other competition registrations.

Team 3189 is still seeking grants and sponsorships from individuals and businesses who wish to help provide teens with valuable work experience in STEM careers and a great place to have fun and make friends. For more information on the EDUHSD robotics team or to find out how to become a sponsor, visit their website at www.eduhsdrobotics.org or email team advisor Patricia Ferrell at patferrell58@gmail.com.

The El Dorado Union High School District is committed to educating each student in a safe, supportive environment that will challenge students to pursue appropriate, rigorous paths for academic and career development and achievement that lead to lifelong learning and a productive adulthood

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