



May 20, 2016

Kids Showcase Design and Engineering Skills at the Sixth Annual FIRST® LEGO® League International Open Championship, May 20-22, 2016

Kids Learn Problem Solving and Teamwork in Addition to Designing and Building Robots by Working with Professional Mentors

[Carlsbad, CA,] **May 20, 2016** -- Over 800 kids ages 9-16 from across the USA-including Alaska, Hawaii, and everywhere in between-as well as student teams from Canada, Korea, and Germany will showcase their hard work after an intense season of designing and building an original robot and researching a real-world problem for their TRASH TREKSM project at the FIRST® LEGO® League Open Championship May 20-22, 2016 held at LEGOLAND California Resort in Carlsbad, California.

At the event 72 teams of students and engineering and technical Mentors will demonstrate their skill for science, mathematics, and technology (STEM). They will compete for honors and recognition that reward design excellence, competitive play, sportsmanship, and project presentations of their research around real-world problems. This year's project theme, TRASH TREK, engaged kids to explore the hidden world of trash, from collecting to sorting to smart production and reuse.

Founded by inventor Dean Kamen, who holds more than 440 U.S. and foreign patents; the mission of [FIRST](#) (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders, by engaging them in exciting Mentor-based programs that build STEM skills, inspire innovation, and foster well-rounded life capabilities. The [FIRST LEGO League](#) program has been inspiring students since 1998, and this past (2015/16) season of TRASH TREK engaged more than 233,000+ participants (ages 9-16, Grades 4-8) in 80 countries around the world.

TRASH TREK season Champions and Runner up Champions from across the country compete in this post-season invitational at LEGOLAND California.

During the TRASH TREK robot game portion of competition, teams run robots on a themed, tabletop LEGO® obstacle course in two minute, 30-second rounds. Teams also present their Robot Design, Project, and evidence of the FIRST LEGO League Core Values to teams of volunteer judges.

"FIRST isn't about competing, it's about cooperating, and recognizing that if you have the right tools, you'll be able to make this world a better place for yourself and for the country," said Dean Kamen, president of DEKA Research and Development and FIRST Founder, adding, "There is no stimulus package that will have as much return as stimulating a bunch of kids to become the workforce of the future, the problem solvers, the creators of the future."

Melinda Del Toro, Vice President of Human Resources at ViaSat, a leading global broadband services and technology company with a number of employee participants in FIRST commented, "At ViaSat, we have seen the benefits of the FIRST program in action; our employees have participated in FIRST as students, mentors, judges and volunteers. FIRST inspires kids nationwide to build their skills in teamwork and communication to problem solving and salesmanship, which are reflective of the program's core values and can be leveraged to prepare students for future opportunities in the workplace."

The 6th Annual FIRST LEGO League Open Championship at LEGOLAND is generously sponsored by ViaSat. Volunteer judges include engineers, teachers, and university students. If you are interested in getting involved with FIRST Lego League this upcoming season contact Lynn Crockett at Lynn.Crockett@LEGOLAND.com.

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 over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$25 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the FIRST® Robotics Competition for students in Grades 9-12; FIRST® Tech Challenge for Grades 7-12; FIRST® LEGO® League for Grades 4-8; and FIRST® LEGO® League Jr. for Grades K-3. 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.firstinspires.org

Additional *FIRST* Southern California sponsorship opportunities and ways to support individual teams are available throughout the upcoming 2016-2017 program year. For more information please contact Cassie McIntyre, Director of Corporate Partnerships for *FIRST* Southern California at 540-336-5036 or cmcintyre@usfirst.org or visit <http://www.cafirst.org/>.