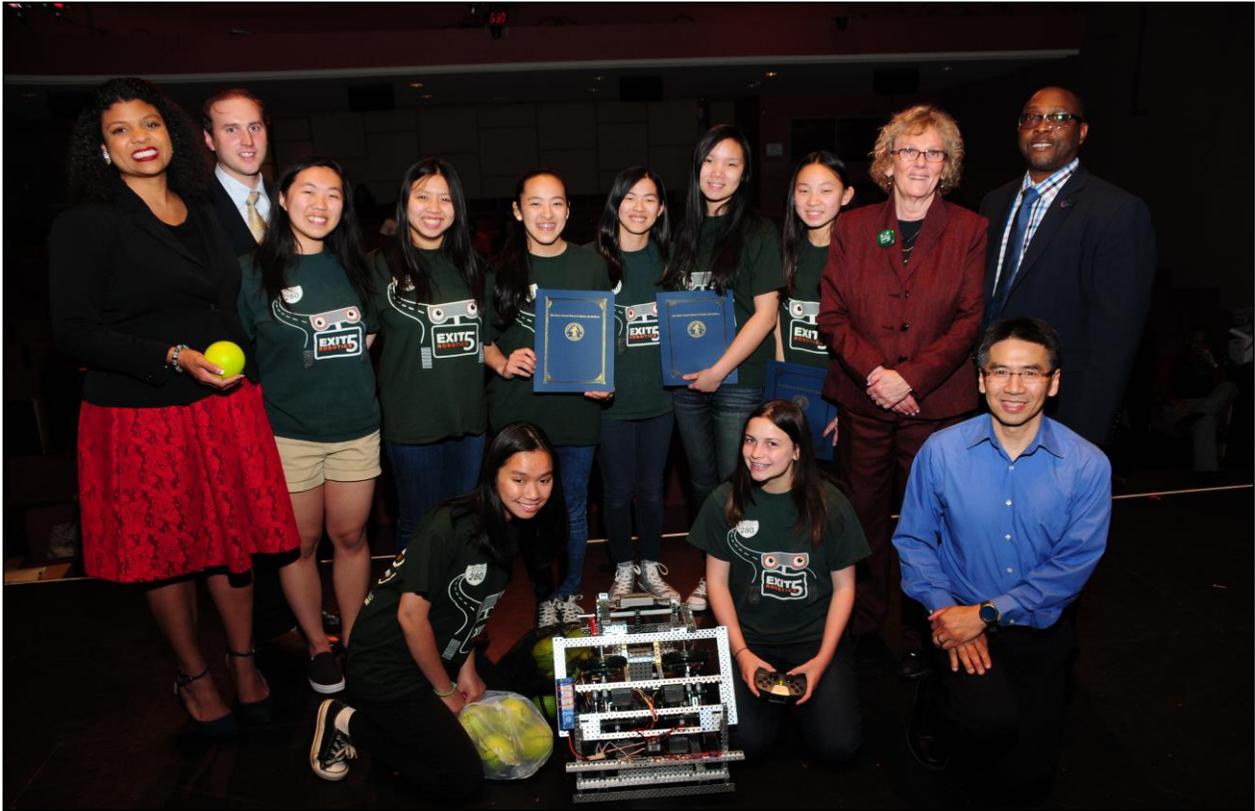


## PRESS RELEASE

May 26, 2016

### **ESSEX COUNTY FREEHOLDERS HONOR THE EXIT 5 ROBOTICS TEAM**

**Winners at the 2016 State Championship VEX Robotics Competition**



(from left to right) Essex County Freeholder Britnee N. Timberlake, Freeholder Leonard M. Luciano, Freeholder Patricia Sebold, and Freeholder Wayne L. Richardson attend the presentation recognizing the Exit 5 Robotics Team. PHOTO BY GLEN FRIESON

(South Orange, NJ) – During its Wednesday, May 25<sup>h</sup>, meeting held at the South Orange Performing Arts Center (SOPAC), in South Orange, the Essex County Board of Chosen Freeholders honored The Exit 5 Robotics Team from Livingston, New Jersey, for its outstanding season and for being trailblazers for young girls in a male dominated field. The Board’s Commendations were sponsored and presented to the team and their coach by Freeholder At-Large Patricia Sebold of Livingston.

“When I learned of this group of young girls, I knew that I had to recognize them for the wonderful things that they are doing in the interest of creativeness, science and in the spirit of positive competitiveness.... they have made their mark on the world of robotics.” said Freeholder Patricia Sebold in her introductory comments. As a retired teacher with over 30 years of experience to West Orange High School, she knows firsthand the coordination and cooperation necessary for a successful team. She further mentioned, although the team represents Essex County, she is proud they all are from her hometown of Livingston.

The Exit 5 Robotics Team is an all-girls FIRST LEGO League (FLL) team originally formed in 2010 with five girls from Livingston, New Jersey. The team had a competitive fire to show they could compete in what was a male dominated endeavor. Although they could have joined other mixed gender teams, most

girls saw extremely limited opportunities to build and program in those environments. The team aspires to provide opportunities for girls to get hands on experience building and programming robots.

In their 7<sup>th</sup> year of competitive robotics, The Exit 5 Robotics Team is nationally recognized, and has been ranked between 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> nationwide in google searches for girl’s robotics teams or all girls’ robotics. From less than 5 out of 180 New Jersey teams in 2010, there are now over 20 all-girls teams competing and winning!

The Exit 5 Robotics Team have consistently been a top level team that has helped drive the rapid growth of all-girls teams in New Jersey. They won the “Think Award” at the 2016 State Championship VEX Robotics Competition. The team actively promotes STEM having conducted over 30 outreach events since 2010.

Over the 7-year period, The Exit 5 Robotics Team has entered 11 different robotics competitions involving 40 qualification events, and winning 23 awards along the way. They qualified and competed in 7 national/international tournaments winning 3 awards and 1 honorable mention, they were US National Champions in the 2015 World Robot Olympiad and in 2012, they were the first all-girls team to win a Champion’s Award in New Jersey FLL, covering a span of 13 years and over 1500 teams.

They were the first team (boys or girls) in New Jersey to win 3 consecutive FLL Champion’s Awards, recognizing the best teams in the competition also meriting advancement into national/international finals competitions. And out of 124 teams that competed in 2015/2016 NJ VEX Robotics Competition, they were 1 of 13 teams to win an award at the NJ State Finals and for 6 consecutive years running (2011-2016), the team has qualified and competed in various national and international competitions.

The Exit 5 Robotics Team is coached by Bill Lam, Yitao Yu and Holly Lam and the 2016 Team consists of: Team Captain Tiffany Yu; Team Founder and Co-Captain Chloe Lam; Members: Stephanie Tam, Alice Huang, Erin Eagen, Lisa Peng, Virginia Cheng, Khushi Amin, and Anna Xia.

Team captain Tiffany Yu gave a wonderful commentary of the growth and advancement the team. She stated, “I’m honored to have had such an immersive experience....to have worked with my team....and I know that these are the people that I want to know 15 years down the line, because they have built robots that can drive upside down; they are people who have programmed robots that can work in autonomous situations, without human intervention, to navigate complex fields; who are going to highly selective and intensely rigorous engineering programs this summer. And I’m proud to say I know them and they have been an amazing group to work with.” She thanked the parents, coaches and Board of Chosen Freeholders for their support and the recognition, and in closing she stated, “I hope together we can continue to encourage young children and young women to engage in technology and science education, because I really think that it is the future.”

The presentation ended with an interactive demonstration that consisted of the robot propelling balls into the audience. Coach Bill Lam who hosts most of the training in his home, was on hand to introduce his team as well as assist in facilitating the demonstration.

The presentation was also attended by Freeholder District 3 President Britnee Timberlake of East Orange, District 4 Freeholder Leonard Luciano of West Caldwell and District 2 Freeholder Wayne Richardson of Newark.

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