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Bibliotech forms three robotics teams for young children

Gift from Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas supports two years of programs

Bexar County's all-digital library and Toyota Motor Manufacturing Texas, Inc., have partnered to bring two Junior FIRST Lego League (Jr. FLL) and one FIRST Lego League (FLL) teams to the South Side branch. Children ages 6 to 11 years old will be able to apply real-world science and math concepts to a challenge set by the FIRST organization. Toyota announced today it would provide Bibliotech with \$15,000 to fund two years of programming at the library.

"Science, technology, engineering and mathematics education is so critical to a person becoming a viable candidate in this 21st century workforce," County Judge Nelson Wolff said. "We are grateful to Toyota for recognizing the importance of engaging our children at a young age by providing them with a fun and practical application of these skills."

All three teams will begin meeting the week of June 16 in the evenings at the library at 3505 Pleasanton Road. The teams will meet once a week through March 2015 and will be coached by volunteers from the community. Parents interested in registering a child for a team should call the library at (210) 631-0180 between noon and 8 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Participants in FIRST Lego Leagues are issued a challenge that is designed to interest children in science and technology through three elements: the Robot Game, Project and FLL Core Values. For the Robot Game, the teams will program an autonomous robot using the LEGO Mindstorm technology. The project entails developing a solution to a problem they have identified within the parameters of the challenge theme. And they will do this all using the FLL Core Values, which include working as a team to find solutions, learning together, friendly competition, discovery and fun.

FIRST, which stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology," is an international nonprofit organization that operates several robotics competitions to engage children of all ages in science and technology. The organization also provides scholarships.

"I'm excited to have this great opportunity for kids who might not otherwise come into contact with robotics teams and competitions until they are in high school," Commissioner Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez said. "This type of programming at our library is very important to the community, and I appreciate Toyota being a partner in that."

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