

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' Robotics Team from O'Fallon To Compete at State Tournament

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Glen Carbon, Illinois – The Purple Robot Penguins, one of Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' (GSSI) Robotics Teams, won the "Project" award at the FIRST LEGO League (FLL) qualifier on Nov. 22 at Carriel Junior High School. Also competing were Girl

Scout teams from Roxana and Belleville. Now, the Purple Robot Penguins will represent Girl Scouts and southern Illinois at the upcoming FLL state tournament.

FLL is a robotics program for 9 to 14 year olds which is designed to get children excited about science and technology, as well as teach them valuable life skills. Along with programming robots, teams are also evaluated on an elaborate research project, as well as how well they demonstrate FLL Core Values, which include teamwork, collective learning, active participation and gracious professionalism. After practicing and preparing for months, teams meet at regional qualifying tournaments to be graded on the three elements, with the top teams advancing to state competition.

Girl Scout Robotics teams are part of GSSI's initiative to engage more girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Studies show that girls tend to drift away from involvement in STEM activities around middle school, despite a continuing interest in STEM subject matter. Other STEM programming at GSSI ranges from doing basic chemistry experiments with younger girls to teaching financial literacy during the Girl Scout Cookie Program to introducing older girls to career mentors in engineering and medicine.

“Engaging girls in STEM in exciting, relevant ways is vital,” explained Buchanan. “Research shows that many students, especially girls, drift away from STEM around middle school. GSSI provides diverse opportunities to build and reinforce interest in these important fields. As shown by our growth in the number of robotics teams, many girls are searching for ways to stay involved in STEM and we strive to provide them with unique and constructive experiences.”

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois serves 14,000 girls and 4,800 adult volunteers in more than 40 counties in southern Illinois. Girl Scouting has inspired more than 50 million girls and women since its founding in 1912. Girl Scouting is focused on providing a premier Girl Scout Leadership Experience for girls in the 21st century, while ensuring the traditions and values that have been core to Girl Scouting since its beginning remain strong and relevant.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is a not-for-profit organization supported by various United Ways throughout the region. Girl Scouts is a Proud Partner of United Way. For more information, please call Jay Strobel at 618.692.0692.

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