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Academy teams tops at annual Robofest

Three teams sponsored by Canton Charter Academy won U.S. Army development grants during the 10th annual World Robofest Championship recently held at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield.

The Joint Center for Robotics at the Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) in Warren awarded grants to teams demonstrating creative and innovative robotics projects with entrepreneurship components.

“Events like Robofest are important to TARDEC because they help us lay the groundwork for the future of Michigan’s engineering and technical workforce,” said Bernard Theisen, project manager for outreach at the Joint Center for Robotics. “Robotics is a multidisciplinary field, so students are exposed to the computer science, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, physics, and math disciplines.”

Robofest, founded by Lawrence Tech professor CJ Chung, is an international competition of autonomous robots - computer-programmed to act independently and not radio-controlled. The competition encourages students to have fun while learning principles of computer science, physics, math, engineering and technology. This year some 1,700 students from 10 states and five countries participated.

The three Canton teams competed in the junior division (grades 5-9). One three-student team named TILT (Technology in Layman’s Terms) built a pinball-type game that moves in concert with a player who is seated on a large exercise ball. The Desert Eagles created an ecofriendly RoboRecycler that sorts recyclables into categories.

CCA’s Dawg Botz won a People’s Choice Award with CART (Carrying Autonomous Robotic Technology). This multipurpose robot uses infrared light to follow a person by employing ultrasonic and infrared sensors to avoid hitting obstacles.
