

LakeExpo.

May 4, 2015 Grant Money Helps Camdenton Robotics Team Extend Its Reach



photo provided

Pictured left to right Row 1: Robotics students Owen Combs, Maya Irvine, Riley Head, Taylor McGowan, Brittany Bolz, Brenden Barbour, Mason Swarts, Azure Miller-Neal. Row 2: Mitch Comer (PLTW Instructor and FIRST Coach), Sherry Comer (Afterschool Services Director); Marsha Schoeneman (Education Foundation PR Chair), Community Foundation of the Lake board members Betty Coleman, Marvin Silliman, Trenny Garrett, Mickey McDuffey (Education Foundation Board Member), Selynn Barbour (Education Foundation President).

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With a \$1,000 grant from the Community Foundation of the Lake (CFL), and \$2,000 from the Camdenton R-III School District Education Foundation, Camdenton schools' FIRST® LASER robotics program is receiving much needed funding.

The Education Foundation also recently enabled a \$2,000 pass-through donation from the DEMDACO company on behalf of Country Crossroads.

These partnerships among CFL, Camdenton Education Foundation and local businesses greatly support the Education Foundation's goal to advance academic excellence in the School District with innovative and creative ideas for teaching and learning.

Just five years ago, the FIRST® LASER robotics program was adopted at Camdenton School District to fill the need for a program that addressed the academic needs of higher level Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) learning in a stimulating, hands-on manner.

"The FIRST® LASER robotics program currently serves 1 in every 19 students out of the District's total student body of 4,200," said Sherry Comer, Camdenton Afterschool Services Director. "LASER teams operate through all district elementary buildings, the middle school and the high school. Each year students are placed in a lottery to determine who gets to be on the teams due to the popularity and opportunities the program offers to students."

Starting with 21 students, the program has exploded and surpassed all goals for growth. It has become a national STEM model for 4-H, capturing numerous awards including Regional Champion and World Champion Finalists at all four levels of the program. Yearly over 300+ students do not get to participate in the FIRST® LASER programs due to lack of facilities, staff and funding for supplies, equipment, travel and food.

The CFL grant, along with the Education Foundation's contribution, helps provide the needed supplies and equipment for students to be successful, and for educators to teach high quality STEM lessons through FIRST® LASER.