

FOR IMMEDIATE MEDIA RELEASE

April 11, 2019

**Charlotte-based community high school robotics team wins FIRST NC State Robotics Championships and seeks community donations to attend FIRST Robotics World Competition in Houston, Texas**

Charlotte, NC: Bots on Wheels, a Charlotte-based high school community robotics team, competed in the FIRST NC State Robotics Championships at Campbell University April 5-7, 2019. The team emerged victorious after twelve rigorous round robin qualification matches (record: 6-5-1) and then swept their opponents undefeated in the quarter finals, semi-finals and finals. The team will now head to the FIRST Robotics World competition in Houston, Texas April 17-20, 2019 proudly representing North Carolina.

Bots on Wheels (Team 4290) was the number 16 seeded team after the qualification matches and was chosen by the number one and number two seeded teams (Green Hope Falcons from Cary, NC and Triple Strange from Greensboro, NC, respectively) to work with them as an alliance in the final matches.

Throughout the entire competition, the teams' robots compete in groups of three known as "alliances" accomplishing challenging tasks on the playing field against an opposing alliance. Rounds last two and one-half minutes and teams must work to score points for their alliance as well as for their own team.

"Happiness and contentment" is how high school senior and two year veteran of the team, Finn O'Connor describes his feelings about going to the FIRST Robotics World competition. O'Connor, who spent two years on another robotics team before coming to Bots on Wheels, is making his first trip to World's. "I am in disbelief that we won States and are now going to the FIRST Robotics World Competition."

New member, Carson Sproles is "shocked and excited" to be competing at FIRST Robotics Worlds. The sophomore, who helps to drive the robot during competitions, comes from Indian Trail, NC to be a part of Bots on Wheels. "It seems unlikely for a team with so many new members to make it so far," he says.

Seven of the ten student members are new to Bots on Wheels. The team graduated twelve seniors last year. "This was supposed to be a rebuilding year for us," says lead co-mentor Cindy Carlson. "Going to FIRST Robotics Worlds this year is unexpected."

Most of the \$19,000 raised by the team this year has already been spent to build the competition robot, pay for their meeting space and pay for district registration fees. "Some of our corporate sponsors and other NC FIRST Robotics teams have rallied around us to help us secure some funding to get to Worlds," says Carlson. "We are hoping that the community at large will also step up and support us."

Bots on Wheels has set up a GoFundMe page to help offset the cost of the trip: ([gofundme.com/2019-destination-deep-space-world-championships](https://gofundme.com/2019-destination-deep-space-world-championships)). Donations will help to cover the cost of travel, lodging, meals and competition fees for the students and their mentors. The team hopes to raise \$10,000. Donations can also be given to the team via:

Venmo: <https://venmo.com>

search by email address [bowcommunityrobotics@gmail.com](mailto:bowcommunityrobotics@gmail.com)

search by phone 7046492460

PayPal: [paypal.me/BOWTeam4290](https://paypal.me/BOWTeam4290)

Bots on Wheels was founded in 2012. Currently, the team has ten high school members who live in Charlotte, Huntersville, Mooresville and Indian Trail. The team is not affiliated with any high school and meets at least once per week in the West Charlotte area to work on STEM related activities including community outreach and planning, designing and programming the competition robot.

Over 400 high school FIRST Robotics teams will convene in Houston from across the nation and from around the world to compete for the FIRST Robotics World title. Bots on Wheels, team #4290, is one of three FIRST Robotics teams in Charlotte and will be the only Charlotte-based team at the world competition.

Throughout North Carolina, there are 71 FIRST Robotics teams. All NC teams must compete in two district competitions working to accumulate enough points to qualify for the state competition. Thirty-two teams met at Campbell University this weekend to compete for the FIRST NC Robotics State title. Fourteen other NC teams have also qualified to compete in Houston for the world title by earning awards such as Rookie All Star, Engineering Inspiration award, Chairman's award, and others.

All FIRST teams have adult volunteer mentors to help guide the students. Many of the mentors work in STEM related fields and provide hands on, real world expertise to the FIRST students they mentor.

In early January, all teams receive the game challenge. This year's game was entitled "Destination: Deep Space" presented by Boeing in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the moon landing. Teams have six weeks to plan, design and program their robots which have a weight limit of 125 pounds. Robots need to maneuver around the playing field with their alliance partners and try to outscore their opponents by performing tasks such as loading cargo, placing hatch panels and climbing onto a platform.

Here is a link to Bots on Wheels' robot, "Wheel Armstrong" (**Team 4290**) during game play at a NC State Championship match (video credit Mike Guadio):

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1v3b7Paidvv4lrmI6dPzxAp14EjzkHCyQ>

**Photo of Bots on Wheels robot, "Wheel Armstrong" being prepped for competition by students at FIRST NC Robotics State Championship (photo credit Mike Guadio):**

[https://drive.google.com/open?id=19uLI9M\\_tOtYt5MT\\_e8LOaua78Lv-Tsli](https://drive.google.com/open?id=19uLI9M_tOtYt5MT_e8LOaua78Lv-Tsli)

**Photo of Bots on Wheels students and their mentors after winning the FIRST Robotics NC state title at Campbell University (photo credit Mike Guadio).**

[https://d2g8igdw686xgo.cloudfront.net/38333626\\_1554723779227747\\_r.jpeg](https://d2g8igdw686xgo.cloudfront.net/38333626_1554723779227747_r.jpeg)

FIRST is an acronym for: **For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology**. FIRST was founded by Dean Kamen in 1989 (inventor of the Segway) who wanted to make robotics exciting, fun, and most of all entertaining. FIRST sponsors programs for K-12 students throughout the nation and the world with the mission to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders and innovators, by engaging them in exciting mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills, that inspire innovation, and that foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership. More about FIRST: <https://www.firstinspires.org/>

For further information about Bots on Wheels, contact lead co-mentor, Cindy Carlson at: [bowcommunityrobotics@gmail.com](mailto:bowcommunityrobotics@gmail.com) or cell number: 704-649-2460.

Team website: <https://www.bow4290.org/>

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Story submitted by Silvia Triana, parent of Bots on Wheels student