Granada Hills Charter Robotics Team Wins “Think Award” at VEX World Championship

May 6, 2019 - Every year during the first weekend in May, Louisville becomes the center of the horse racing world with the running of the Kentucky Derby.

This year, during the last weekend of April, Louisville was the center of a very different competition with very different competitors: the 2019 VEX Robotics World Championships for high schools. Granada Hills Charter’s own Robodox Team 599C not only qualified for this elite competition through a series of regional successes, the team walked away with the “Think Award” in the tournament’s Math Division, given out for innovative programming.

In winning the award, the Robodox competed against 100 teams, including teams from Tunisia, China, Bahrain, Canada and New Zealand. Overall, more than 550 teams from high schools in more than 30 countries took part in the competition, which each year brings together competitors from several different robotics tournaments into a final, culminating competition.

The challenge – or the main game – for each season of VEX Robotics changes. For 2018-19, the main competition was called Turning Point. It involved designing robots that would hit stationary flags with plastic balls or flip caps set out on a 12-feet by 12-feet playing field.

The Think Award – given to the Robodox for designing a simple and intuitive approach to how their robot performs in its autonomous mode – was the third award the Robodox have won at a World Championship competition, and it was the third year in a row that a Robodox team has qualified for the World Championship. Earlier this year, on its way to the World Championship, the team won the Design Award for engineering excellence – given out for its well-engineered robotics system and accompanying clear and concise design notebook – at the California State Championship.

Formed in 2001, the the GHC Robodox are one of the oldest robotics teams in the Los Angeles area. The Robotics program provides Granada Hills Charter High School students with challenging, innovative and
real-world science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) lessons. But it also goes beyond STEM: The team is student-led. Not only do the students build the robots and compete in tournaments, they also run the day-to-day operations of the team, handling purchasing, managing their machine shop and even providing mentoring to elementary school students.

With its Think Award in hand, the team now has its sights on next season’s game, ominously called “Tower Takeover.”

All of us at GHC know the Robodox won’t have any trouble tackling this challenge, and that they will most likely find a surprising and innovative way to do so.

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**About Granada Hills Charter School:** Granada Hills Charter School, the largest charter school in the nation, is an independent public school in the San Fernando Valley. A fiscally independent conversion charter school, Granada Hills Charter has a current student enrollment of approximately 4,750 in its high school program and 400 students to be enrolled in 2019-20 in its new TK-8 program. Both programs have a combined annual student wait list of nearly 4,000. The School’s student population is one of the most diverse, with more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home and over 60 nationalities represented. Over 50 percent of students are eligible for the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program. As a 501c3 non-profit benefit corporation, the School’s Governing Board is the legal entity overseeing all school policy and its $60 million operating budget. The school is ranked “#1 Best Charter High School in California,” “#4 Most Diverse Public High School in Los Angeles” and “#11 Best Charter High Schools in America” by Niche.com in the 2019 Best Schools rankings.