

THE blarney stone

A PUBLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY OF NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND MARIST ACADEMY



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Notre Dame's bees are buzzing

Notre Dame Prep robotics team is rolling into a new season after a nervous start

After going through some early jitters about whether enough funding was going to be available to even field an entry this season, the 29 students on this year's Notre Dame robotics team, the Killer Bees/Team 33 are now (and have been) working feverishly with their adult mentors to get ready for their opening competition. Forty teams from the state of Michigan were at Kettering University in Flint the weekend of March 4th for the FIRST Robotics district competition.

Economy takes a toll

Heading into the 2011 season, the team received word that a major source of their corporate funding was being dramatically cut due to the still-floundering economy. With a major competition schedule looming, parents, mentors and the school's advancement office put their heads together to see if they could find other sources of revenue to rescue the team. Students formed marketing teams to give presentations to companies and explained what FIRST is and how sponsoring the Killer Bees can benefit both the team and a sponsoring company.

The results were phenomenal! The Killer Bees now have access to enough sponsor support to get them through this season. But the struggle is still not over, as there is next year and many years after where the

team will need continued support.

Running a successful, competitive FIRST Robotics team is not cheap. Registration fees for events cost around \$15,000 and parts for the robot can run as high as \$10,000. Travel costs (hotels, food, buses) run nearly \$15,000 and miscellaneous expenses—uniforms, costs for awards preparation, team dinners, world championship

fees, etc.—come out to be about \$10,000. This all adds up to about \$50,000 a year! Though pricey, all involved say the benefits of this program are invaluable, as students work alongside professional engineers, gaining real-world experience in a real-life design process.

How it works

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was founded in 1992 by noted inventor Dean Kamen to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, New Hampshire, FIRST designs accessible, innovative programs to partner students and professionals to build self-confidence, knowledge and life-skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering.

From 28 teams in 1992, FIRST has expanded to over 1,680 teams worldwide today. Teams from many other countries, including Brazil, Israel and Australia, are expected to compete with U.S. teams in late April at the 2011 FIRST World Championship Event at the Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Missouri.

Every year, FIRST designs a new robot "game" that is released in January. Teams then have six weeks to design and build a robot (weighing approximately 120 lbs.) that will compete against other robots. At a typical competition, teams are randomly matched with other teams and play 12 two-minute matches over two days. Teams



Killer Bee John Soisson working on a robot part in the team's shop at the Chrysler Technical Center in Auburn Hills.

Please see Bees, page 3

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy provides its economically diverse student body a Catholic-Christian and internationally recognized college-preparatory experience of lasting value.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE GRADUATES PICK UP DIPLOMAS
 (See page 4)

A world walker



UDM pre-med student spends what little free time she has planning a walk of the world

Future doctor Malinda Killu '08 (NDP) is grateful for what NDP gave her: “. . .one of the best educations around.” She also plans a long walk!

What college are you currently attending?
I am currently attending University of Detroit Mercy. I plan on graduating in May 2012. I chose this college for various reasons. One, it's close to home and it helps since I'm such a family person. Second, I wanted to attend a Catholic university. Third, there are not many



Malinda Killu '08 (NDP) conducts an experiment as part of her studies at UD Mercy.

universities where you can receive a private education, your professor makes time to know you on a personal level and you're able to go to lunch with the whole department, including the chair of the department. They're not just your professors; they're your friends who will eventually be at your wedding. Plus, at UDM, we have Father Albright, and every dental/medical school student knows Father. So it's pretty awesome being taught by someone who's older than the biology books. My post-graduate plans consist of going to medical school to be an M.D. in anesthesia. I'm looking at Northwestern, John Hopkins,

Loyola and University of Michigan. If I have a chance of going out west, I'll do it!

What are you currently studying? Why did you choose this field?

I am currently studying biochemistry/pre-med with a minor in both philosophy and Spanish. I chose biochemistry because you take just as many biology classes as a biology major and a lot of advanced classes like a chemistry major, so pretty much, I get the best of both worlds. Plus, I think as a biochemistry major, it looks a lot better on an application to medical school.

Are you involved in other things at UDM? Do you hold any special office?

I am very involved at UDM. I have been a teaching assistant in both the biology and chemistry departments. I'm one of the managers in the computer lab. I'm going on my third service trip through the ministry as being an Alternative Spring Break leader. I have been researching since my second semester of my freshman year, which has taken me to several American Chemical Society regional and national conferences. This year I will be going to Anaheim, Calif., and Indianapolis, Ind. Also, I am vice president of one of the most active clubs on campus, the Chemistry Club.

What is the most challenging thing about attending UDM?

I would have to say that the most challenging thing about attending college is balancing your academic life with your social life. “There is also the “hidden curriculum” of attending college. There's no “Interpersonal Relationships 1000” course to register for—you have to figure this stuff out on your own. The lessons here are way more important than your chemistry courses, and they are much more difficult to learn.

Do you feel that Notre Dame Prep prepared you for life after high school?

Notre Dame Prep prepared me very well for my life after high school. I approached college with confidence because of the education I had at NDP. NDP taught me time management and how to study, what

to study and when to study. I finished my freshman year of college with a very strong GPA and until this day, I have maintained a very good GPA. Someone once told me, “Notre Dame Prep gave you one of the best educations around, and one day you're going to have to give back to them.” As of right now, all I can do is thank NDP, but once I'm successful, my gratitude will be given to them.

Was there a certain teacher who inspired you in a special way?

Well, I do have to say that all of my teachers who taught me at NDP had a positive influence on me, but the one that I will always remember, and people from my graduating class and above will always remember, was Mr. Cannon. He had a great sense of humor, he was very intelligent and knew his material. I grew a passion for history because of him. He knew how to make anyone laugh. Even if you were just walking down the hall, you would laugh because you knew something was going to be said by him.

What do you see as the value of your NDP education and of Catholic education in general?

My NDP education helped me get into college and taught me how to get through college. My Catholic education taught me my ethics and helps me keep my faith. They go hand in hand and that's what has made me the person I am today.

What are your hopes, dreams and aspirations?

Medical school is very hard to get into. So I hope I get into medical school—especially Northwestern. Also, I want to travel the world but not how an average person would do it. My professor gave me this idea and it will happen when I have enough time—I want to walk the world. I will start at the southern tip of South America and walk along the coast up into North America, then cross at the Bering Strait and end up in Ireland. It would be the way to avoid all oceans and say that once in my life, I walked the world. 🌍

Bees, from page 1

pick up different partners and opponents for every match, which encourages team members to work together and help each other even off the playing field. FIRST has come up with terms for this unique form of competition: “coopertition” and “gracious professionalism.”

Regional events are usually held in



Andrew Palardy, left, Keith Watza and Peter Dondanville working on the chassis and elevator subsystem for “Buzz XVI,” the Killer Bees 2011 robot entry.

university arenas and involve 40 to 70 teams cheered on by thousands of fans over two and a half days. The World Championship event caps the season.

Referees oversee all competitions, and judges evaluate teams and present awards for design, technology, sportsmanship, spirit and commitment to spreading FIRST’s message: “science and math are fun.”

The Chairman’s Award is FIRST’s highest honor and recognizes a team that exemplifies the values of the organization. The Killer Bees won the Chairman’s Award in 2009 and 2010 at the State Championship level, earning them the right to compete for the same award at the World Championship.

More than just competitions

The Killer Bees do more than just build robots however. Throughout the year, robot demonstrations are held at various schools, libraries and public events to raise awareness not only of high school robotics, but of the important role science and technology play for the future of our society.

Notre Dame Prep alumna and current mentor of the Killer Bees, Carolyn Beyer, reinforces this. “FIRST is about empowering students to become leaders in society.

STEM (science, technology, engineering and mechanical) education is so important, and to see my students find their confidence, create things, laugh and work together makes all the time, money and stress completely worth it.” She says these students are the future, and building robots helps to build character and gives them important real-world experiences they’ll

take with them wherever they go in life.

Tim Grogan and Jim Zondag from Chrysler LLC also are mentors to NDP’s robotics team and have been working with the students for nearly the team’s entire existence.

Staying active in the community is a big part of a typical year for the robotics team. They participate in the Walk for Hunger, the Youth Engineering and Science Expo, the Plumber’s Union Fair, and the Rochester Christmas Parade. They visit local childcare facilities, teaching young children about tools and demonstrating robots. And they hold demonstrations around metro



Clockwise from left, Nick Finn, Bryan Culver and Emily Leopold working on the tube-collecting subsystem for “Buzz XVI.”

Detroit, including some held at the Apple Store and Oakland University.

Other special projects they’ve worked on this year included promoting the new Boy Scouts of America robotics merit badge, and volunteering and raising money for the Children’s Leukemia Foundation. They also are a regular and visible presence on the NDPMA campus, demonstrating their robots at the corn roasts, pep rallies, open houses, math and science classes and at lunchtime. The team has been featured in the Oakland Press, the Detroit Free Press and a number of other local newspapers.

Each year at the various competitions, the Killer Bees distinguish themselves as one of the loudest, brightest, and friendliest competing robotics teams. With dedicated students and the indispensable mentors and engineers, the ‘Bees’ continue in their tradition of excellent sportsmanship and expertly constructed robots.

According to mentor John Dondanville, last year was a good year, “and the Killer Bees are looking forward to participating in this year’s competitions and for many years to come.”

Last year the Killer Bees were semifinalists at their two district competitions, and quarterfinalists at the Michigan State Championship. At the World Championship-

2011 Killer Bees Team #33 Corporate Sponsors

- The Chrysler Foundation
- BAE Systems
- TI Automotive
- International Industrial Contracting
- Takata
- Irvin Automotive
- JDM Systems Consultants
- Plex Systems
- Commercial Contracting Corporation
- Recticel
- C.H. Raches, Inc.
- Mastech
- Bleichert
- ASCO Valve
- McNaughton-McKay
- Autoliv
- Molex

ship Event in Atlanta, Georgia, where over 350 teams compete, the “Bees” won the Industrial Design Award, one of only 12 such awards given out. In 2009 they also won the Imagery Award at the world event.

At press time, early results for 2011 were not yet available, but check out the team’s web site at KillerBees33.com or follow on Twitter (@FRC33) for updates. 🤖

IB graduates pick up diplomas and certificates

In an informal ceremony held in January in the Pontiac campus cafetorium, graduates from the class of 2010 received official documents from the International Baccalaureate Organization, including diplomas and certificates.

Head of school Fr. Leon Olszowski, s.m., and IB Diploma Programme coordinator Sharon Derico, among other school officials, were on hand to welcome the alumni back to Notre Dame Prep.

The following is a list of the 25 IB Diploma Program students from the class of 2010. Also listed are the universities and colleges in which the graduates are now enrolled. Congratulations to all!

Jacklyn Adams – Michigan State University
Paul Barron – University of Notre Dame
Elise Boike – University of Michigan
Patrick Connolly – University of Michigan
Anne Drolet – Central Michigan University
Christopher George – Michigan State University
Kendall Hendler – Michigan State University
Morgan Hoxsie – Michigan State University
Alessandra Jannette – University of Michigan
Charles Kosuth – University of Michigan
Moonkyu Lee – University of Michigan
Brad Lorant – University of Michigan
Andrew Lyng – University of Michigan
Matthew Lyon – University of Michigan
Lawrence MacLean – Michigan State University
Edward Maggioncalda – Aquinas College
Maureen Moynihan – Ohio Northern University

Ena Patterson – Kendall College of Art and Design
Rachel Pieciak – Kalamazoo College
Nickolas Salic – Michigan State University
Jonathan Sheperd – University of Notre Dame
Emily Slaga – University of Michigan
Daniel Varsanik – University of Michigan
Nicholas Wrobel – University of Michigan
Deanna Zerafa – University of Michigan




IB grads Brad Lorant, left, Matthew Lyon, Andrew Lyng and Lawrence MacLean after picking up their International Baccalaureate documents from Notre Dame Prep.

JV GIRLS VISIT GLEANER'S COMMUNITY FOOD BANK AND PROVIDE MUCH-NEEDED HELP FOR HUNGRY DETROIT-AREA KIDS

Ten members of the Notre Dame Prep junior-varsity girls basketball team pitched in over the Christmas holidays at Gleaner's Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan. Coaches Bobbie Hall and Tim Scollin accompanied the girls at Gleaner's Pontiac location in late December as they packed over 200 backpacks full of food for hungry children in metro Detroit.

Denise Leduc of Gleaners said that the kids provided a much-needed service. "Children who rely on free and reduced-fee hot lunches during the week at school are often without the food they need on the weekends and holidays. The bags the girls packed will help fill the gap!"

Gleaners distributed eight million pounds of food in November and December—that's 100,000 households that needed help this holiday season. Last year, Gleaners distributed more than 36 million pounds of emergency food to over 484 partner soup kitchens, shelters and pantries in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston and Monroe counties.

Last February (2010), the varsity boys basketball team helped sort nearly three tons of food at Gleaners. 

Below: Sophomore Jackie Vyskocil helps sort food for Gleaners in December.

Below left: Members of the NDP JV girls basketball team and coach Hall after volunteering at Gleaners Community Food Bank



Pontiac campus begins breakfast service March 2nd

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy began a breakfast service March 2nd at the Pontiac campus. Breakfast is being served from 7:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and includes breakfast sandwiches, fresh-baked muffins, bagels, cereal, pop tarts, juice, milk and fruit. The menu could be expanded in the future. Flyers with additional information about the breakfast program were also distributed in the cafeteria to the students. 🍳



Notre Dame's first graders connect with counterparts in Georgia

For the past six weeks, the first-grade class at Notre Dame's lower division has been connecting through the Internet with their first-grade counterparts at Notre Dame Academy, an International Baccalaureate-authorized and Marist-sponsored school in Duluth, Georgia. Each Thursday afternoon, Emily Giacona's students connect through video-calling provider Skype and engage in inquiry and the sharing of knowledge with teacher Irene Nowicki's first-grade class at NDA in Georgia.

"We hope to connect with other classrooms around our world in coming months," Giacona said. "This activity provides our students the opportunity to become connected to others and also to grow a greater understanding and appreciation for our own school." 🌐



Emily Giacona's first-grade class (above) Skypes with first graders at Notre Dame Academy in Georgia every Thursday.

Five Notre Dame Prep students named National Merit finalists

Five students at Notre Dame Preparatory School in Pontiac have been selected as finalists for the 2011 National Merit Scholarship program.

Seniors Alexandra Genord of Rochester, Norman Jin of Rochester Hills, Reine Mager of Sylvan Lake, Joshua Merlo of Rochester Hills and John Soisson of Rochester Hills were named finalists for the prestigious scholarship.

From over three million high-school seniors in the U.S., only about 15,000 earn finalist status. About 8,400 scholarships, totaling more than \$36 million, will be awarded later this year.

To become a finalist, a student must have an outstanding academic record throughout high school; be endorsed and recommended by the school principal; and earn SAT scores that confirm the student's earlier qualifying test performance.

Three types of National Merit Scholarships will be offered in the spring of 2011 with winners announced beginning in April.

These scholarship recipients will join more than 275,000 other distinguished young people who have earned the Merit Scholar title since the program began.

The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC), a not-for-profit organization based in Evanston, Illinois, that operates without government assistance, was established specifically to conduct the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. 🏆

Choir receives new acoustical shell

Thanks to a contribution from one of the school's wonderful families, the choir received shipment of a brand new acoustical shell.

The shell is designed to contain and project music so that the students can hear themselves better when they prepare for performances or competitions. According to Choir Director Dave Fazzini, the shell "looks fantastic and the kids are already hearing a difference in their sound."

The gift was secured by the Choir Boosters after finding it on eBay. It had been ordered by another school in Texas, but was never used. The shell was purchased from proceeds that were donated to the school in December as part of a designated contribution to the choir. The best news is that the shell was secured at such a discount that there are additional proceeds that will be used to further enhance other aspects of the music program.

Thanks to all involved for making this special gift happen! 🎵



Fifth graders discuss real-life topics at IB-PYP Exhibition

On February 16th, NDMA fifth graders formally presented their extensive research on a variety of topics at its first annual International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme "Exhibition."

The exhibition represents a significant event in the life of both Notre Dame Marist Academy and its students, synthesizing the essential elements of the program and sharing them with the whole school community. It was an opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of their student profile that have been developing throughout their engagement with the PYP. It is a culminating experience marking the transition from the PYP to the Middle Years Programme (MYP).



Notre Dame Marist Academy fifth graders perform during the opening presentation at the school's first annual International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme "Exhibition."

Schools are given considerable flexibility in their choice of the real-life issues or problems to be explored and investigated in the exhibition.

NDMA fifth-grade students presented on the following topics:



Charlie Uchno, left, Jayla Brown and Emma Fredin present their findings on childhood obesity at the NDMA IB-PYP Exhibition held February 16 at the Waterford campus.

- **Steroids in Sports:** Brian Blakeslee, Rithik Aggarwal, Anthony Pangori
- **Childhood Obesity:** Jayla Brown, Emma Fredin, Charlie Uchno
- **School Bullies:** Liz Koempel, Cheyenne Fish, Dominic Mistretta
- **Nutrition in Schools:** Mary Yanik, Katelyn Kozole, Rachel Michel
- **Texting while Driving:** Bryan Stapelton, Arman Muqueem, Sterling Hallmann
- **Student Rights and Responsibilities:** Tessa Woryk, Kelly Niepokuj, Grace Wagner
- **Keeping Michigan Clean:** Joe Mervenne, Kyle Colburn, Kody Haley
- **Exotic Species in the Great Lakes:** Kyle Cragg, Thomas Ridge, Claire Seitzinger

NDPMA also is on Facebook! Find link on the NDPMA web site: ndpma.org.



NDPMA is on Twitter! (twitter.com/NDPMA) Get the latest news and updates on your cell phone by texting "follow NDPMA" to 40404.



A world of education

The *Blarney Stone* is published five times per year by the Advancement Office of NDPMA. Contact The Blarney Stone at 248-373-2171 or mckelly@ndpma.org.
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