

TEAM RUMBLE, RUMBLES TO NATIONAL COMPETITION

By: Chris Robinson



Team Rumble may not have the same ring as Boston Celtics or Los Angeles Lakers, but neither of those teams has a ball-playing robot as their leading scorer. That's right, a ball-playing robot named The Rumble is the central figure in Ashe County High School's entry into the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) robotics competition to be held March 16-18 at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond.

Coached by ACHS teacher and Ashe Campus adjunct instructor Thelma Kastl, a talented group of students has built and assembled The Rumble and has it ready for competition. The FIRST program, funded through a grant with NASA, is designed to get students excited and actively involved in engineering and technology. "We want to inspire kids with science and math role models," Kastl said. "This is a group of students building robots from scratch and learning about robotics, electronics and, most importantly, teamwork along the way."

Though the project was built by students at the high school, several students and faculty members in the Industrial Maintenance program at the Ashe Campus provided assistance as well. The WCC students helped with machining parts for the robot and worked with the ACHS students on understanding how The Rumble would actually work. This mentoring relationship provided much needed assistance for Team Rumble as they battled a tight six-week timeline

from the start of the project until it had to be shipped to Richmond for the competition.

"This provided our [WCC] students with a unique opportunity to work with the high school," said Chris Bare, industrial maintenance instructor at the Ashe Campus. "The high school students did the work, but the college students provided timely advice and some technical assistance along the way. It was a good example of the teamwork between the Ashe Campus and the new Ashe County High School."

This year robots in the FIRST competition will "shoot" a ball through a hoop in an allotted time frame. The team whose robot scores the most baskets will be the winner. Kastl's grant proposal was one of only two such programs funded in North Carolina. In addition to the robotics competition, Kastl and her students received a second grant to fund a video about the project and the process.

While the competition is important, Bare sees the lessons learned in completing the project as far more valuable than whether Team Rumble wins in Richmond. "This was a unique learning experience for both the high school students and the WCC students," he said. "They were afforded a glimpse at advanced technology and that bodes well for their futures."

Kastl concurred with Bare's assessment. "We are excited about the opportunities the competition has afforded the high school students and most appreciative of the efforts of the Ashe Campus in helping us on the project," she said. "Whatever the results of the competition, the kids are already winners. The lessons learned in building the robot are something this group will carry with them for the rest of their lives."



The Dental Assisting Club

By: Janessa Johnson



So far this semester, the Dental Assisting Club has stayed very busy. We recently have started rotating through dental offices, as well as maintaining a dental clinic on campus. Three groups of dental students just put up bulletin boards in the clinic illustrating dental topics such as why people need x-rays and why people should have their wisdom teeth removed. For our January and February fund-raiser, we decided to sell Happy Home flavoring, which really boosted our dental club funds.

Even after all this, we Dental Assisting students still have time to have fun (but not much time!) Some of us at-

tended the Student Support Service luncheon on February 15, and then on February 17, we were in the student commons handing out dental hygiene items in support of February being Dental Health Month. Tuesday, February 22, some of us attended the self-defense class that was also held in the Student Commons. Our upcoming events include Student Awards Night and Merlefest.

Each of us are presently looking forward to taking two out of the three to the state boards, which will be on infection control and radiography. So, if any of you are having trouble with your teeth or you just need to see a dentist, make an appointment with us, and we will be glad to help! And, remember to keep brushing and

