



## NOTEBOOK

# Robotics contest kicks off

Robotics season on Long Island officially kicked off this month with a special event revealing this year's competition theme to more than 800 techie teens at Stony Brook University.

The theme, titled "Aerial Assist," challenges three-team alliances to score balls in goals during 2-minute, 30-second matches — with extra points earned by robots working together and throwing and catching balls over a truss suspended about 5 feet high.

This year's Long Island Regional FIRST Robotics Competition will draw 49 local teams to Hofstra University March 27-29. FIRST is an acronym for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.

"This proves to be an exciting time for the students and the mentors when they learn the name and the rules of the game for this year's FIRST Robotics Competition," said Joani Madarash, executive director of the School-Business Partnerships of Long Island, the competition's sponsor.

At the kickoff, each team received a kit of components that they will use to design, build and program their robots over a six-week peri-



Long Island students learned the rules of the new game, "Aerial Assist," at the FIRST Robotics season launch at Stony Brook University's Jacob Javits Lecture Center on Jan. 4.

od. In addition, parents learned about the impact of the program on their children's lives and shared ideas on ways to help raise funds for the teams.

In other news, Plainedge High School's Team 527 won the competition's musical theme contest. The team will receive \$1,000, and their song, "Ignition," will be played during this year's matches.

The contest received 17 entries from 12 schools.

## BRENTWOOD

### Animal advocates

Brentwood High School students Kayla Diaz, Jennifer Luna and Ashley Paez took their love of animals to another level by creating a "Lend a Paw" club for fellow animal advocates at their school.

The club is intended to help support local animal shelters and related organizations through volunteer work and fundraising efforts.

The three students are enrolled in the animal science program at Eastern

Suffolk BOCES' Eastern Long Island Academy of Applied Technology, which launched in the fall.

"To their surprise, so many of their peers showed up to join and participate that the meeting had to be moved from a classroom to the cafeteria," said ESBOCES animal science teacher Lisa Mongiello.

## EAST ISLIP

### Autism bracelets

John F. Kennedy Elementary School students recently raised \$1,250 to benefit the EJ Autism Foundation in East Islip by selling more than 100 rubber-band bracelets made using Rainbow Loom, a bracelet-making kit.

The project was initiated by Emily Blair and Joy Petersen, who were joined by four classmates.

"I congratulate all of these students on their exceptional achievement, as it signifies attributes of outstanding character and service," Kennedy Principal Aileen O'Rourke said.