



Cardinal Machine

ABOUT TRIPLE HELIX

Triple Helix, the Menchville Robotics Team based at Menchville High School in Newport News, Virginia, competes in the *FIRST* Robotics Competition as team number 2363. *FIRST* is an acronym that means “For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology.” Dean Kamen, the noted inventor of the popular Segway Human Transporter, founded *FIRST* in 1989 as a means to excite students about technology, math, and science. The *FIRST* Robotics Competition began in 1993 with 28 teams competing in a New Hampshire high school gymnasium. By 2009, the competition had grown to nearly 1,700 teams internationally, with 42,000 high school students participating. Throughout the years, *FIRST* has continued to add new programs to appeal to students ranging from 1st through 12th grades, including the Jr. *FIRST* Lego League, the *FIRST* Lego League, and the *FIRST* Tech Challenge. For additional information regarding *FIRST*, please visit www.usfirst.org.

Triple Helix was formed in 2007 with a generous grant from the US Army Research Laboratory, an individual sponsorship, and the in-kind support of a few small firms in the Newport News region. The team quickly garnered the support of technical mentors from the Army Research Laboratory, NASA, Old Dominion University, Christopher Newport University, and Menchville High School. The team has achieved success quickly, winning the 2008 *Rookie Inspiration Award* and the 2009 *Underwriters’ Laboratory Industrial Safety Award* at the NASA/VCU Regional held in Richmond, Virginia. Our goal as a team is to continue to grow into a world-class *FIRST* Robotics Competition team by continuing to win awards and compete effectively with our robots on the field of play. Ultimately, we hope to be consistent participants at the *FIRST* Championship, which is held each year at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

In keeping with the fundamental principles of *FIRST*, *Triple Helix* is dedicated to the community in which we live. As such, the team started a community outreach program in 2009 that has already begun to grow. The team has participated in a number of community events by displaying and demonstrating our competition robot. Then, in July 2009, in partnership with Menchville High School and the ECPI College of Technology, the team offered its first robotics summer camp. The camp was attended by twelve middle-school-aged students who learned the fundamentals of robot design and programming using the popular Lego Mindstorms NXT robotics kits. The team has also raised funds for the Children’s Hospital of the King’s Daughters cancer unit by selling lemonade and collecting donations at a local Farm Fresh grocery store. The team is actively seeking additional opportunities to give back to our community. Should you have a community or charitable event that you feel would benefit for the participation of *Triple Helix*, please feel free to contact us using the information provided on our web site.

