



FIRST[®]

> For Inspiration & Recognition of Science & Technology

2003 Annual Report



Team 111, Wildstang
Winning Alliance Member
2003 FIRST Robotics Competition
Championship

// ...to create a world where science and technology are celebrated...where young people dream of becoming science and technology heroes... //

Dean Kamen, Founder





FIRST FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

The mission of FIRST, since its inception in 1989, has been to find ways to excite and motivate young people to pursue careers in science, technology and engineering. To-date we have achieved remarkable success by designing accessible, innovative programs that build self-confidence, knowledge and life skills. This Annual Report reflects these successes by way of data and real numbers in program participation, dollars contributed by our supporters, and other measures that prove FIRST is a thriving organization.

However, what truly depicts how successful FIRST has become, is best seen on the faces and heard in the cheering voices of the tens of thousands of students participating in and celebrating science and technology at the dozens of FIRST events across the country.

We deeply appreciate and would like to thank the volunteers, sponsors, mentors, students, teachers, community leaders and staff whose fierce commitment has made FIRST's vision a powerful reality. There is much to celebrate, and I am confident that we will have much more to celebrate as we move forward together.

Cordially,

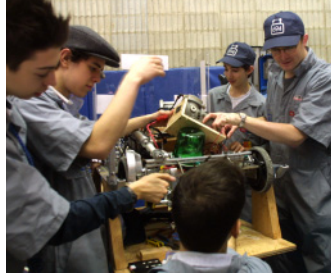
Dean Kamen, *Founder*



// FIRST has changed my life like nothing else in the world. I've not only grown to improve in math, science and engineering, but also to enjoy them...I plan to participate in Princeton University's partnership with a local high school FIRST team. FIRST provides kids with an intellectual sanctuary, a place where they can play hard and work hard //

Lauren Lyons, Former FIRST team member, Team 362, Princeton University, Mechanical Engineering Major





FIRST CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

It has always puzzled me how difficult it is to briefly explain what FIRST is to a stranger and how it differs from other programs that appear to do similar things. We always say "You've got to see a competition". It's very different from a science fair, other science competitions, even other robotic events. It's about a lot more than robots. Although the pressure and excitement is intense, the rules and awards make the event a "co-opetition", meaning players are motivated to know their competitors, make friends with them and even help them out. We call it an environment of "gracious professionalism". There's no booing, not because it isn't allowed, but because your opposition in one game may be your partner in the next. The game is new every year and it's tortuous design makes it exciting for both experts and novices. It's part rock concert, part basketball, part auto race (the pits), part awards night at the Oscars. The volunteerism is extraordinary. There are lots of engineers, teachers, parents, college students, FIRST alumni and others who act as mentors and coaches, referees and stagehands. And every competition has a large group of leaders who act as judges. They not only determine the awards, but interact with all the kids with attention and support. All of us are always awed by the ingenuity of the designs and strategies that are presented.

Perhaps that's why 36 Universities offered \$3.8 million in scholarships to this year's 25,000 participants. Or why 700 corporations provided sponsorship and career opportunities and over 4000 volunteers contributed time and effort to support teams and 23 regional competitions throughout North America.

If the rest of society behaved the way people do in these co-opetitions, the world would be a better place.

We look forward to 2004.

John Abele, FIRST Chairman
Founder Chairman,
Boston Scientific Corporation

» 90% FIRST mentors rated FIRST as successful in increasing student interest and enjoyment of science, math, and technology.

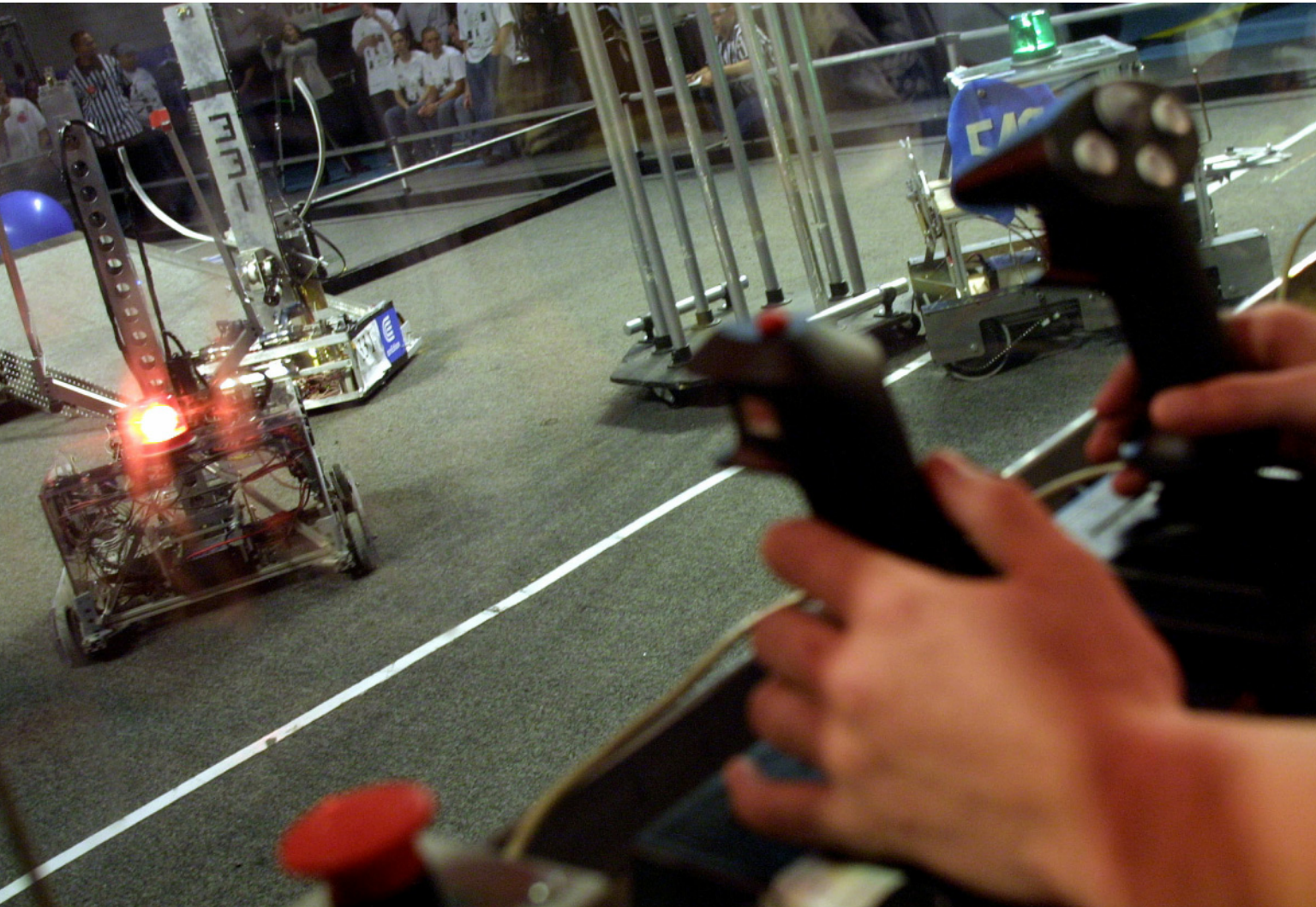
» 92% retention of FIRST Robotics Competition Teams.

» 77% FIRST team leaders rated FIRST effective in influencing schools to include more science & technology in curriculum.



// ...It's like life. You never have enough information. You never have enough time. The kit of materials may be what you have in the warehouse. There are always people doing competing things and you must have a strategy. We've created a microcosm of the real engineering experience //

Woodie Flowers, Co-Founder FIRST Robotics Competition





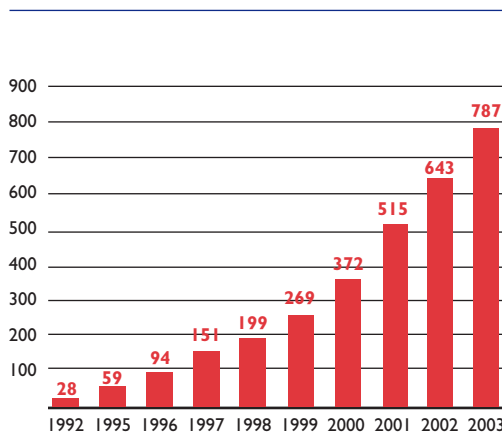
FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The **FIRST Robotics Competition** provides high school students the opportunity to work alongside professional engineers to design and build robots. Student teams work with corporate sponsors to compete in 23 regional events leading up to the championship. The process inspires students to learn more and pursue further opportunities in science, engineering and technology.

Key to FIRST's success is exposing students to professional engineers who mentor teams. Mentors become role models and help the kids develop skills in engineering, technology, math, project management, communications, and teamwork.

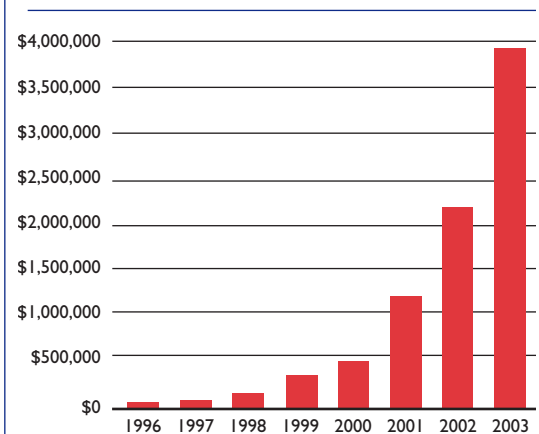
Although competition is a driving force — and the 2003 “Stack Attack” championship at Houston’s Reliant Stadium had all the electricity of a major sporting event — FIRST is not about wins and losses. FIRST is about inspiring minds, focusing potential, and celebrating intellectual achievement.

FRC Team Growth 1992-2003



▲ Number of Teams

FIRST Scholarship Opportunities 1996-2003



▲ FIRST scholarship funds



// I want to build things nobody else has even thought of yet. //

Charles Peterson (10 years old), FIRST LEGO League Team Member





FIRST LEGO LEAGUE

FIRST LEGO™ League introduces students, 9 to 14, to the fun and experience of solving real world problems by applying math, science and technology. Using LEGO Mindstorms technology, kids work alongside adult mentors to design, build and program robots to solve real world challenges. In 2002, the “City Sights” challenge included urban planning issues like housing, food supply and waste disposal. This year’s challenge, “Mission Mars”, visits the Red Planet and explores the Martian landscape with visions of colonization.

In just six years, FIRST LEGO League has become a worldwide program with more than 20,000 students participating in tournaments in 44 US states, and 8 countries. FIRST high school teams often mentor FLL teams, providing guidance and incentive for the students to “graduate” to our high school competition.

FLL teams compete with other teams in over 30 tournaments and must also present their solutions to a panel of judges. It’s fun. It’s exciting. And the learning lasts a lifetime.

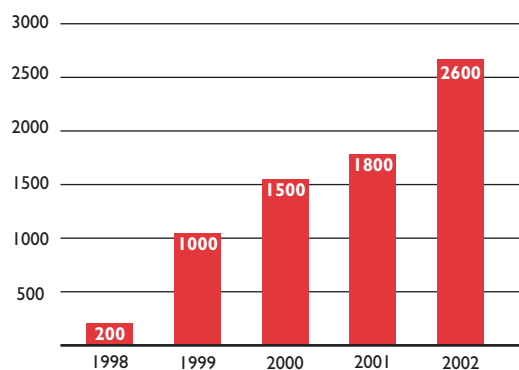
FIRST & The LEGO Company: A Partnership



Creativity. Imagination. Learning. Fun.

They’re the building blocks of both FIRST and The LEGO Company. Our shared commitment to unleashing the minds of young people is the basis of our partnership and the inspiration for FIRST LEGO League.

FLL Team Growth 1996-2003



▲ Number of teams



“ The program has provided Kevin with invaluable experience in design, engineering and teamwork, and with the careful guidance of these wonderful mentors, our son has become a confident young man who has found a place where his natural curiosity and talent are appreciated. ”

Tom and Kathie Rugani, FIRST Parents

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The following, abbreviated financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis of accounting. Ernst and Young LLP audit the Organization's financial statements annually; copies of FIRST's detailed audited financial statements and accompanying notes are available by contacting FIRST Finance.

The Organization's federal grant programs are subject to financial and compliance audits in accordance with Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133. In addition, various state and private funding sources reserve the right to perform separate program audits.

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 2003, there were no audit findings and FIRST received an unqualified opinion from its' auditors. Additionally, the OMB Circular A-133 audit had no findings or questioned costs. Thus, FIRST is currently qualified as a low-risk auditee.

FIRST FINANCIALS

Statements of Financial Position	June 30 2003	June 30 2002
Assets		
Cash and equivalents	\$3,368,061	\$4,147,513
Investments	478,109	246,059
Accounts receivable (net of allowance for doubtful accounts of \$16,000 in 2003 and \$20,000 in 2002)	748,060	276,744
Property, plant and equipment:	5,646,097	5,547,346
Less accumulated depreciation	1,594,239	1,313,553
Net PP&E	4,051,858	4,233,793
Prepaid expenses and other assets	65,060	119,609
Total assets	\$8,711,148	\$9,023,718
Liabilities and net assets		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$327,623	\$565,949
Deferred revenue and other credits	105,654	46,687
Refundable advances	2,841,200	2,942,000
Total liabilities	3,274,477	3,554,636
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	4,804,227	4,869,297
Temporarily restricted	632,444	599,785
	5,436,671	5,469,082
Total liabilities and net assets	\$8,711,148	\$9,023,718

Statements of Activities:

Total revenues and other support	15,290,977	10,552,364
Operating expenses:		
Robotics Competition	10,281,715	7,349,758
FIRST Place	50,908	89,155
FIRST LEGO League	690,159	479,845
Event Package expenses – Robotics Championship	2,169,637	–
Management and general	1,678,134	1,651,990
Operation of building	305,608	316,257
Depreciation	280,686	282,390
Total operating expenses	15,456,847	10,169,395
Operating (loss) gain	(165,870)	382,969
Non-operating gains:		
Contribution from Founder	–	400,000
Auction proceeds	–	371,200
Refundable advances - amortization	100,800	–
	100,800	771,200
(Deficiency) excess of revenues over expenses and (decrease) increase in unrestricted net assets	(65,070)	1,154,169





FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) was founded to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., the 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering.

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FIRST

200 Bedford Street
Manchester, NH 03101
800.871.8326
www.usfirst.org