



MEDIA CONTACT:

Christine Torre
cmtorre11@gmail.com
770-888-1717

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MARCH 30, 2015

**Area Youth Recognized for Innovation as
FIRST® LEGO® League (FLL®) Global Innovation Semi-Finalist**

CUMMING, GEORGIA, MARCH 30, 2015 – [FIRST® LEGO® League](#) (FLL®) announced 20 finalist teams will advance to the annual *FIRST®* Championship in St. Louis as part of the annual [FIRST® LEGO® League](#) (FLL®) Global Innovation Award presented by XPRIZE. The [Braille Boys & Annie](#) from Cumming, Georgia were selected from 527 entries representing 22 countries and one U.S. territory. The team will travel to St. Louis from April 22 to 25 to present a creative solution to a question on one of today's most relevant topics: the future of learning.

Following the St. Louis event, three finalist teams will travel to Washington, D.C. in June to be honored at a ceremony at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The winning team will receive a cash prize of \$20,000, and two runner-up teams will take home \$5,000 each. Prize money must be used to further the teams' ideas or to continue in *FIRST* programs.

The FLL Global Innovation Award presented by XPRIZE demonstrates that FLL teams have credible and novel solutions for real-world issues. It further showcases that even the youngest students are capable of developing innovative solutions with potential to help the world at large.

The Braille Boys & Annie have had an extremely successful season this year and are ranked as one of the top teams in the state of Georgia. Part of the team's success is their innovative solution, the Insta-Braille™. The Insta-Braille™ was created by the team to help combat the Braille literacy crisis in America. According to the National Federation of the Blind, 90% of blind children in America today are not taught to read and write Braille. As a result, these children will grow up and 50% will not graduate high school while 70% will be unemployed. The team was shocked by these statistics and wanted to help blind children have a brighter future.

The Insta-Braille™ is a device which teaches beginning Braille including characters, numbers and words. A blind child can feel the Braille character then push a button to hear the corresponding letter, number or word. The first generation Insta-Braille™ is being used successfully by blind children in inner city Atlanta to learn the Braille characters A-Z, the foundation of Braille literacy. The team has already filed a provisional patent for the Insta-Braille™ and will pursue a full utility patent under guidance from the FIRST Lego League product development team following the World Festival.

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is an international program for 9 to 16 year-old children (ages vary by country) created in a partnership between *FIRST* and the LEGO Group in 1998 to get children excited about science and technology – and teach them valuable career and life skills. Children work alongside adult Mentors to design, build, and program autonomous robots using LEGO MINDSTORMS® and create an innovative solution to a problem as part of their research project.

Innovators and inventors play a critical role in growing our economy and improving our quality of life. The FLL Global Innovation Award presented by XPRIZE is designed to encourage and assist teams with the further development of their original and important ideas for solving global issues.

Registered FLL teams have the option to submit their inventions to be considered for the FLL Global Innovation Award at the end of each season.

The Global Innovation Award presented by XPRIZE, is sponsored by Edison Nation, Booz Allen Hamilton, John Deere, Rockwell Collins and the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

ABOUT FIRST®

Accomplished inventor [Dean Kamen](#) founded [FIRST®](#) (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., *FIRST* designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge, and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology, and engineering. With support from over 200 of the Fortune 500 companies and more than \$20 million in college scholarships, the not-for-profit organization hosts the [FIRST® Robotics Competition](#) (FRC®) for students in Grades 9-12; [FIRST® Tech Challenge](#) (FTC®) for Grades 7-12; [FIRST® LEGO® League](#) (FLL®) for Grades 4-8; and [Junior FIRST® LEGO® League](#) (Jr.FLL®) for Grades K-3. [Gracious Professionalism®](#) is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community. To learn more about *FIRST*, go to www.usfirst.org. To learn more about the “FLL WORLD CLASS™” Challenge, go to www.FIRSTLEGOLeague.org.

ABOUT THE LEGO GROUP

The LEGO Group is a privately held company based in Billund, Denmark. The company is still owned by the Kirk Kristiansen family who founded it in 1932.

The LEGO Group is engaged in the development of children's creativity through playing and learning. Based on the world-famous LEGO® brick, the company today provides toys, experiences and teaching materials for children in more than 130 countries.

For more information, visit www.LEGO.com.

FIRST®, the *FIRST®* logo, *FIRST®* Robotics Competition, FRC®, *FIRST®* Tech Challenge, FTC®, Coopertition®, and Gracious Professionalism® are trademarks of the United States Foundation for Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (*FIRST®*). LEGO® and MINDSTORMS® are registered trademarks of the LEGO Group. *FIRST®* LEGO® League, FLL®, Junior *FIRST®* LEGO® League, Jr.FLL®, FLL WORLD CLASS™, and Jr.FLL THINK TANK™ are jointly held trademarks of *FIRST* and the LEGO Group. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2014 *FIRST*. All rights reserved.

#