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## PRESS RELEASE

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### Students Capture Top Honors at 2014 National Robotics Competition

Traverse City, MI – Students from the TBAISD Career Tech Center Manufacturing Technology Academy (MTA) delivered outstanding results in the 2014 National Robotics Challenge (NRC) in Marion, Ohio April 11-13. Competing against hundreds of college and high school teams, MTA student-built robots grabbed multiple first and second place awards in addition to bringing home the event's top honor, the coveted Honda Innovation Award.

A team lead by three young women from Glen Lake, Kalkaska and Forest Area high schools took **first place in the Manufacturing Robotic Work Cell** contest in addition to the **Honda Innovation Award** with their "Making Melodies" work cell.

The cell used a robotic arm and components from an aquarium to fill stemmed glasses with water to the precise level that would allow them to produce the musical tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," or "Twinkle Little Star" when tapped by a simple baton. The engineers who judged this contest cited its clever design, original idea and the team's forward thinking during project development as reasons for selecting the project out of 400 others for the Honda Innovation Award.

A team of three young men from Frankfort, Kingsley and Buckley high schools took **first place in the Robot Construction** contest with their robotic "Garden Defender," designed to visually track and discourage rodents and other large garden pests from destroying valuable vegetation. This project was one of only 10 also nominated for the Honda Innovation Award.

In addition, MTA fielded two robots which took **first and second place in the Rescue Robot** contest. With team members from Bellaire, T.C. West, a Kingsley home school, and St. Francis, students designed and built rugged remote-control vehicles that could climb a 45-degree plywood ramp, negotiate a bed of pea gravel and a six-inch-high beam, and use cameras to see inside a dark plywood "cave" to pick up four ping pong balls and deliver them to a pedestal in under three minutes.

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These and other MTA student-built robot will be on display May 21, 2014 from 6-8 p.m. at the Hagerty Center during the Northern Michigan Mathematics, Engineering and Science Symposium.

Started in 1986 by the Society of Manufacturing Engineers, the National Robotics Challenge is the world's longest continually-running robotics competition and this year's event was its 29<sup>th</sup>. You can find out more about the National Robotics Challenge at [www.nationalroboticschallenge.org](http://www.nationalroboticschallenge.org).

The Manufacturing Technology Academy (MTA) is a partnership among the TBAISD's Career Tech Center and area manufacturers and is housed in Northwestern Michigan College's Parsons-Stulen building. Many of the robot components were printed on 3D CAD and printing technology provided by MTA, Microline Technologies, Northwestern Michigan College, RM Young and RJG Inc. You can find out more about MTA and watch videos of some of the events at [www.mta.tc](http://www.mta.tc).

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MTA welcomes classroom visits. Media may contact:

Tim Wheatley, MTA Instructor (231) 995-1304

Pat Lamb, CTC Principal (231) 922-6260

### **Manufacturing Robotic Work Cell:**

3 Awards: First Place Gold Award, Honda Innovation Award Nominee, Honda Innovation Award Winner

3 Team Members:

Alexis Archer, Kalkaska High School

Amanda Lodge, Glen Lake High School

Mary Graham, Forest Area High School

### **Robot Construction:**

2 Awards: First Place Gold Award, Honda Innovation Award Nominee

3 Team Members:

Austin Oberski, Frankfort High School

Colton Lowe, Kingsley High School

Michael Rosek, Buckley High School

### **Rescue Robot: "Snow Leopards"**

Award: First Place Gold

3 Team Members:

Michael Byard, Schooled at Home

Kevin Kolodziej, TCAPS West Senior High School

Joel Zemanek, TCAPS West Senior High School

### **Rescue Robot: "Team Inferno"**

Award: Second Place Silver

3 Team Members:

Alec Stilwell, Bellaire High School

Max Casler, St. Francis High School

Logan Moore, TCAPS West Senior High School

The Manufacturing Technology Academy is a program of the TBAISD Career-Tech Center. The Center offers a choice of 21 tuition-free career and technical education programs to eleventh and twelfth grade students in the five-county Grand Traverse region. Additional information is available at [www.tbactc.org](http://www.tbactc.org)