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CALIENTE

Lego Club looks to win, yes, but build skills, too

By Karen Schaffner
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

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They're not the Legos you used when you were a kid.

No, these remote-controlled, chip-driven Lego robots are made to accomplish an important task: win at the annual Lego League tournament held each December in Phoenix.

Last year, the Tucson Lego Club team won the Robot Performance Award. Club organizer and director David Kha has confidence his team will shine this year, too.

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"I have no doubt that we're going to win again," he said. "Our kid is good."

But winning is really only a minor focus of the club.

At the Tucson Lego Club, meetings are meant to be fun with a purpose: Kha wants members to learn skills that will apply to other areas of life.

"Lego is important to kids because they tend to be more patient when they work with Legos," he said.

That patience can be applied to homework, chores, even to relationships with others.

Any kid - boy or girl - who likes to build with Legos can join the club. Members range in age from 4 to 18 and are divided into two groups: the Lord of the Lego, for kids up to 9 years old; and the Lego Masters, for those who are older. It's the Lego Masters who compete.

The club meets on the first and third Sundays of the month and will be meeting Sunday at the Ward 6 Council Office on East First Street. A year's membership is \$10, though visiting is free.

So, what do members of the Lego Club do during a meeting?

They build.

There are two ways to go about it. Members can check out sets such as those found in the store or build from their imagination. The club has blocks in every size and shape, including the big Duplos for little kids.

If members choose to build from their imagination, there is a limitless supply of blocks. According to Kha, "mountains of Legos" are placed on several tables, and members are free to find the piece they need.

"(Kids) cannot have that many (pieces) at home," Kha said.

At the end of the meeting, members vote on their favorite creation, and the winner gets a prize.

Contact reporter Karen Schaffner at 573-4119 or kscaffner@azstarnet.com.



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The Tucson Lego Club

What: A club for boys and girls - ages 4-18 - who like to build with Legos. Younger children should be accompanied by an adult.

When: Next meeting is 2-4 p.m. Sunday.

Where: Ward 6 Council Office, Meeting Room, 3202 E. First St.

Cost: Free to visit, \$10 a year to belong

Information: Call 323-8278 or e-mail khasan@aol.com.

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