

NEWS RELEASE

2017 NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOL



‘Boldly Go Where No One Has Gone Before’

The Seton Catholic Robotics Club loves nothing more than to take engineering principles and skills learned in the classroom and run them through real-world applications. That passion leads club members to compete in FIRST Robotics competitions and perform a unique community service project for special-needs children.

The club, known as Team 1212 in competition circles, has been active for more than a decade and is the forerunner of Seton’s Pathway to Innovation:

Science and Engineering. Launched in 2015, the program offers students a concentrated, 28-credit curriculum across four years to include engineering principles and methodology, research and documentation, and hands-on design.

Team 1212 was an early participant in FIRST Robotics competitions in Arizona. In 2018, it was awarded the creativity in design trophy for innovation at the regional tournament at Grand Canyon University. Overall that year, Seton placed 13th among 42 teams from California, Colorado, Idaho, Texas, Utah, and Mexico.

Robotics students traditionally cap off their busy season with the annual “Kids in Motion” derby, which began in 2013. For several weeks leading up to the event, club members work to adapt Power Wheels cars for children with disabilities. The modified electric cars are presented to the kids and their parents at a spring event either at the Seton campus or a local park. The Robotics Club partners with Advanced Therapy Solutions of Gilbert on the program, which allows children with special needs a chance to have fun while experiencing increased mobility and sociability.

The Robotics Club and Team 1212 have inspired a number of Seton grads to pursue STEM careers, including Kate McBryan ’03. While pursuing a PhD in aerospace engineering at the University of Maryland, she was part of a team that built and operated the Dynamic Manipulator Flight Experiment for NASA and even experienced a flight on NASA’s DC-9 “Weightless Wonder” aircraft. For McBryan, the chance to defy gravity was one small step on her journey from the Robotics Club to fulfilling her dream to work with space robots at NASA.

Photo: 2018 Robotics Team: L-R, Ronald Gordon (mentor), Matthew Halfmann, Eric Feil, Cal Gillette (Seton Alum), Clare Peterson, Connor Davis, Nicole Feil, Francis Lim, and Patrick Freer. Not pictured: Phillip Warren and Michael Foor (mentors), James Heinemann, Uriel Anderson, Cole Shapiro, Thomas Knaggs, John Buessin and Daniel Streeter