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## Team 1676 excelled in 2008; ready for 2009

*(by Kathryn A. Burger - February 10, 2009)*

It's been another banner year for the Pascack Valley Regional High School District 's Pascack Pi-oneers Robotics F.I.R.S.T Team 1676. In the 2008 season, the team, comprised of students from both Pascack Hills and Pascack Valley high schools, racked up an impressive record:

- □ 2008 New Jersey Regional Chairman's Award
- New Jersey Regional Quarter-Finalists
- Greater Toronto Regional Chrysler Team Spirit Award
- Greater Toronto Regional Quarter-Finalists
- Wold Championship/Galileo Division – 18th out of 86

Their hard work and dedication was matched by the team's support network – the Pascack Pioneer Parent Association – the "Pi-Parents" - who facilitate their participation in competitions as well as literally "feed their enthusiasm" with homemade meals brought to the school during their marathon work sessions. The network also includes their sponsors, coaches, teachers and mentors.

Although the Pascack Valley Regional Board of Education provides some funding, it's not enough to support the team's participation in the many competitions held throughout the year. Corporate and local sponsorships are invaluable to the team's success.

The team recently held its Third Annual Sponsor Appreciation Night. Individuals representing many of the corporate sponsors as well as local sponsors attended the event. "Platinum" sponsors KPMG of Montvale; Dassault-Falcon Jet of Teterboro, the Honeywell Corporation, LaCour, Inc., of Fairfield and Dimensional Communications, of Northvale, where honored, as were Davey's Locker and Russ Chapman; Nu Products Seasonings; Maximum Exposure Public Relations; Perfect Limo; Natural Wireless; Behnke's Paramus Building Supply; and many more sponsors were acknowledged at the reception.

The team's mentors for the 2008 season included Don Rotolo, who began working with the team when his employer, Mercedes-Benz, became a corporate sponsor. They have since dropped their sponsorship, but Rotolo has continued to work with the team, on his own time. Phil Paspalas, a teacher at Hills, was the team's head coach aided by Kevin Killian, a math teacher at Hills. The team also has the support of the district administration

In November, the team hosted "Panda-monium" at Hills. The Team 1676, the Pi-Parents and the mentors and coaches all worked together to make the event a success. Team member Lizzie Rosalia, a senior at Pascack Valley, was instrumental in bringing the competition to Team 1676 territory and worked tirelessly to help organize the event that drew from 17 schools in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. (A team member since her freshman year, she was recently accepted to MIT and will begin her studies in the fall.)

In addition to exciting match-ups of teams in competition, they held a food drive to benefit the Helping Hand Food Pantry in Hillsdale; sold foods and beverages at the Panda Café; and presented a seminar led by two students on Autodesk Inventor. A "Pi" eating contest pitted coaches and mentors against one another to see who could eat the most pies in three minutes.

The team's head coach for the 2009 season is Kevin Killian. Bill Giraud joined the coaching staff for the new season; he teaches physics at Pascack Valley. Phil Paspalas, who had been the team's head coach, was promoted to assistant principal/athletic director at Hills.

The 2009 season is underway and the team is building its newest robot now. The team will travel to Trenton for the New Jersey Regional competition that will be held on Feb. 27 and 28 at the Sovereign Bank Arena, 81 Hamilton Ave. For further information about the competition, visit

For further information about the competition, visit [www.usfirst.com](http://www.usfirst.com). The team is also looking forward to competing at the Palmetto Regional in North Carolina at Clemson University in March.

For more information about the Pascack Pi-oneers, including how to become a sponsor, visit [www.team1676.com](http://www.team1676.com)  
For information about F.I.R.S.T. – For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology – the non-profit organization established in 1989 by Dean Kamen, the inventor of the Segway Human Transporter, who sponsors the annual robot competitions among students worldwide, visit. [www.usfirst.com](http://www.usfirst.com).

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^ [back to top](#)