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31st Smart-A-Thon a Big Success CV High Robotics Team are Big Winners

By Mary Pinola

The Mary Pinola/Crescenta Valley Chamber EDUCATION FUND recently hosted its 31st Smart-A-Thon at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital's Council Room. After a three-year hiatus due to COVID restrictions, this popular event came back strong with 108 attendees anxious to match wits and support educational programs at the same time. The first-place winners were the Crescenta Valley High School Robotics Team.

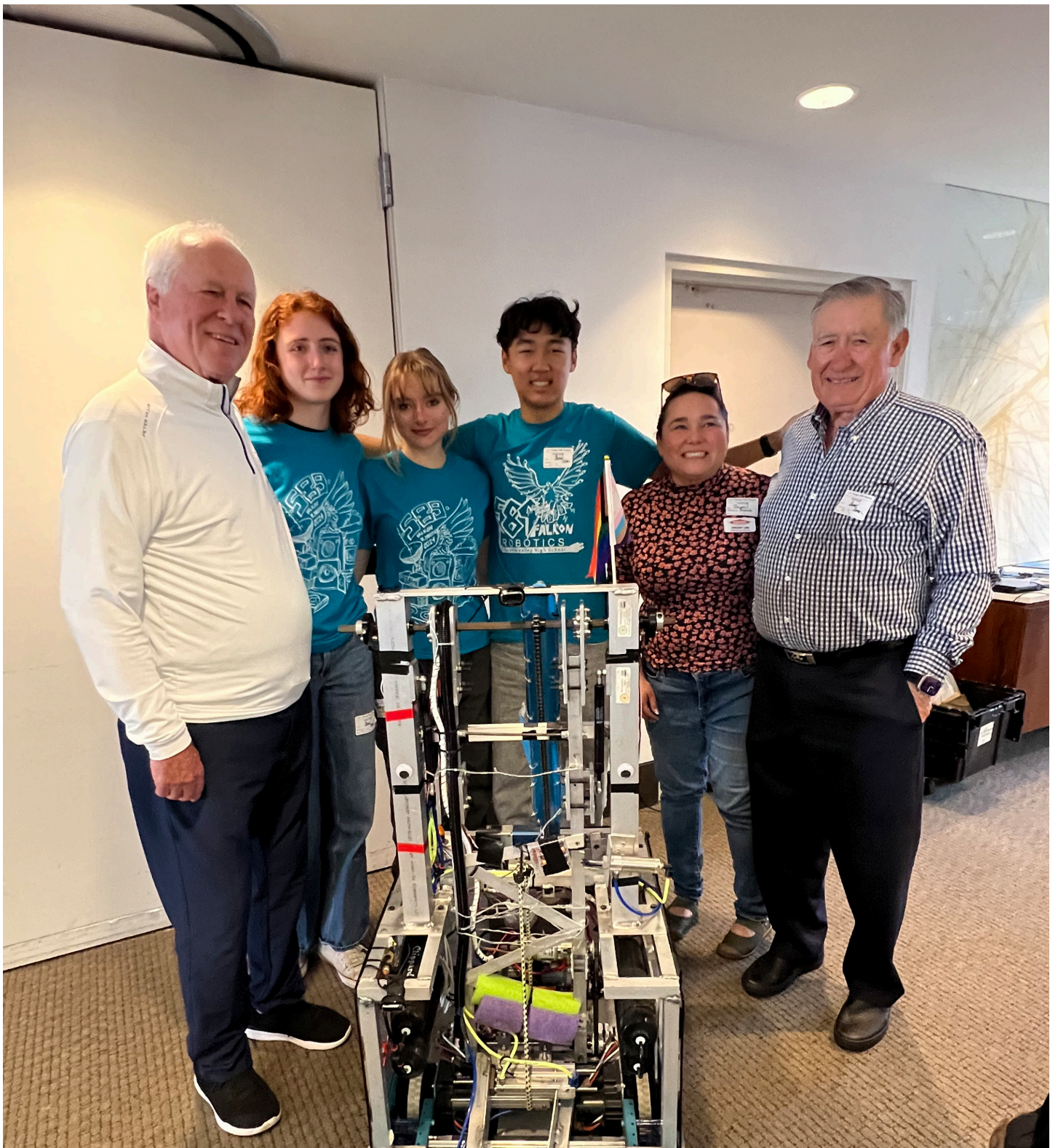
Greeting participants to the event were directors Mary Pinola and Jo Loomis. Capturing everyone's attention was a robot named "Chad." The robot was the brainstorm of members of the Crescenta Valley High School Robotics Team.

Teams of 4 members represented organizations throughout the Crescenta-Canada Valley including the Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station, YMCA of the Foothills, La Crescenta Woman's Club, Bob Smith Toyota, Crescenta Valley Insurance Company, and Living Beauty.

Witty and fun skits were coordinated by masters of ceremonies, Lieutenant Ryan Vienna of the La Crescenta Sheriff's Dept. and community volunteer, Eleanor Wacker. Dave Silversparr, former Captain of the Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station, provided piano entertainment during the event. Non-profit organizations in attendance were eligible for a prize drawing. The two winners, who each received \$500, were the USC VHH Foundation and the YMCA.

Robot Chad and his enthusiastic creators led an impromptu dance contest. Chad, adorably did his version of a jazz dance and later community members joined in. Geordy Strong and his daughter, Charlotte, were outstanding when they showed everyone what a well-executed "Westcoast Swing" dance looked like.

A team-centered trivia quiz included questions from current events, local happenings, ways to enrich one's life, and even some information to be safe while driving or getting a



Left to right: Charlie Kenny, Renee Limonadi, Chloe Schroeder, Dylan Kim, Tiffany Lou, and Rich Semler

good night's rest, which challenged the attendees. The winners of the quiz included Tina Marie Ito's USC VHH Foundation, the YMCA, Crescenta Valley Insurance, and Bob Smith Toyota. Proceeds from the event are dedicated to supporting outstanding educational programs in the Crescenta-Canada Valley and this year helped programs including the YMCA, Living Beauty & women with cancer, La Canada High School and Crescenta

Valley High School instrumental music programs, Crescenta Valley High School Robotics Program.

The Education Fund is a donor-advised fund administered by the Community Foundation of the Verdugos, Edna Karinski, Executive Director, and since its inception in 1990 has provided over \$400,000 to programs and has a corpus of approximately \$550,000.