

Teamwork takes Trail kids to K'nex top

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The winning team, from left, Pat Carpenter, coordinator; teacher Gina Pricci, students Abigail Wilson, Anna Wohlgemuth, Isabella Coleman, and Madison Norman; and teacher Laurel Kinback.



Abigail Wilson and Madison Norman put the finishing touches on their All-In-One 3600 people mover

Madison Norman, Anna Wohlgemuth, Abigail Wilson and Isabella Coleman hardly consider themselves scientists or engineers. But the four fifth graders from Lackawanna Trail Elementary Center bowled over the competition last Friday in building an eco-friendly car that could overcome an obstacle.

“I think what’s so cool is that we’re all girls, and people sometimes think that only boys know how to break things down technically,” Wilson said upon returning to her home school Friday after spending much of the day at Johnson College in Scranton for ‘The K’nex Challenge’ organized by the Northeastern Intermediate Unit.

Some 130 fourth through eighth-graders from more than a dozen schools worked to create mini versions of ‘eco-friendly people movers.’

The winning team from Trail built an ‘All-in-One 3600’ vehicle, so named because Norman said, ‘well, it could go all over, working its way up a ramp or falling off its course and righting itself.’

She thought it was pretty neat that when other teams asked the judges how they might improve their entries for the future, they were told “to look at our Trail cars. That really says something.”

A second team consisting of Daisy Petty, Ashtyn Mecca, Taylor Kilmer and George Kwiecinski also had its work cut out during the competition Friday.

Kwiecinski said that even though the group’s ‘Helpful Handicapped Car Saving Planet Earth One Day at a Time’ was a mouthful, and not quite a winner despite its sleek look, the competition was a terrific experience.

He said a number of schools had teams that were hand-picked by teachers to participate.

Trail, however, had a series of in-school rounds over the previous month where the top two teams got to represent the school.

“That was very fair,” he said.

Both he and Mecca also noted the whole experience might mean a job as an engineer could be in their futures.

“But, hey, I’m just in fifth grade,” Kwiecinski smiled.