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Cedarburg High School Robotics Club Helps Establish Meaningful Career Path

Aaron Denk hired as Robotics Engineer at PCC Robotics

Germantown, WI: For the past 12 years, Cedarburg High School (CHS) has offered its students the opportunity to join CHS Robotics Team, an after-school club that engineers, builds and tests robots to compete in FIRST® Robotics Competitions. The organization explains “under strict rules and limited time and resources, teams of students are challenged to raise funds, design a team “brand,” hone teamwork skills, and build and program an industrial-sized robot to play a difficult field-game against like-minded competitors.” Proclaimed as the Ultimate Sport for the Mind, the mission of the program is to increase interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and reward millions of dollars in college and technical program scholarships every year. Over 5,000 teams participate annually across the U.S. as well as Mexico, Turkey and other countries.

The CHS Robotics team, #3197 or the HexHounds, raises about \$35,000 annually through corporate sponsorships, and various fundraising events to offset costs of robot materials and components, travel to regional competitions and provide its team members with scholarships. Corporate sponsorships allow local companies to facilitate a recruiting pool, and colleges like MSOE recognize the program when considering scholarships. Many students who join CHS Robotics Team have gotten internships and scholarships as a result of their experience with robotics, including full-ride scholarships to prestigious engineering schools.

This year the team of CHS Robotics students manufactured a robot entirely in house, that shoots a nine-inch game piece into a goal in order to score points, as well as other various tasks. Maxwell Roth, a four-year member of the Robotics Team says, “being able to make robots from scratch and make everything in house is really amazing. Seeing the process from start to finish is a great learning opportunity.”

For a CHS Robotics alum like Aaron Denk, the club impacted his career path more than he would’ve imagined. After developing interest in robotics in middle school, he continued it at CHS by joining the Robotics Team and it grew into a passion that led him to MSOE where he got a degree in Mechanical Engineering. During his time there, Aaron continued to mentor the high school team, and additionally interned at PCC Robotics where he later got hired on full time as an Applications Engineer. Denk said, it was “very rewarding to go through four years on the robotics team, at first having no idea what you wanted to do after high school, and then developing your own career path towards a passion of your own.”

Denk has worked on a wide variety of projects at PCC Robotics, developing end of arm tools, custom work cells, and other unique solutions. Denk says, “starting a new project with a wide variety of potential solutions and engineering it down to what works best is what I enjoy the most. No two projects are alike, yet every project builds on one another and expands our knowledge base.”

About PCC Robotics: PCC Robotics is a division of Professional Control Corporation (PCC). Serving Midwest manufacturers, PCC Robotics delivers turnkey collaborative robot (cobot) based systems utilizing Universal-Robots as its foundation. These systems are often commissioned in hours/days vs. weeks/months allowing the manufacturer to quickly realize the ROI, which is typically less than 200 days. For more information, visit www.pccweb.com/robotics/.