CONTENTS

PUBLISHER'S PAGE
8 Hurricane Season is Here Again

CALENDAR JUNE 2018
10 June 2018

COMMUNITY NEWS
12 A Bark and A Bite – Brunch for the Animals 2018
14 An Un"FORE"gettable Day on the Greens
16 From Russia With Love

FEATURE STORY
19 Loyalty Miami is Always Loyal to Their Clients

INSPIRING INDIVIDUAL
20 Remembering South Florida’s Legendary Rabbi

MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE CHIEF

ASK THE EXPERT
23 Allievating Neck Pain
31 To Be or Not to Be Insured – That is The Question

SCHOOL NEWS
24 Miami Jewish Day Schools’ Robotics Festival Feedback was Phenomenal
26 ACES Team of Teachers Made the Honor Roll Again
28 ACES Kindergartners Enjoyed a smART Field Trip!

PHOTO OF THE MONTH
31 The World’s Favorite Magazine™

SEEN ON SCENE
32 Community Snapshots

PET OF THE MONTH
33 Your Pet Could Be Our Pet of the Month!

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Miami Jewish Day Schools’ Robotics Festival Feedback was Phenomenal

BY BEVERLY PERKINS

The Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE), in collaboration with the Yerucham (Israel) Science Center, hosted its second International Robotics Festival in late spring at Scheck Hillel Community School.

Following the success of last year’s inaugural event, six more schools joined the competition. The nine schools include Brauer Malmomides Academy, The Gordon School of Beth David Congregation, Hebrew Academy (RASG), Hochberg Preparatory - a David Posnack Jewish Day School, Lehrman Community Day School, Scheck Hillel Community School, Temple Beth Am Day School, Yeshiva Toras Chaim Toras Emes Academy, and Yeshiva Elementary School, have been working hard on completing the Space Mission challenge using Lego EV3 and Space challenge sets.

The festival showcased this innovative approach to STEM education which combines mathematics and science with Lego Education, enabling participating third- and fourth-grade students to grasp robotics principles and work collaboratively to solve problems.

The Miami Jewish Day School Robotics Program is funded through a $40,000 grant from the Miami/Yerucham Project, a collaboration between the Greater Miami Jewish Federation and its Israeli partnership city of Yerucham, and is facilitated by CAJE, a subsidiary agency of the Federation.

This year, nine teachers participated in a one-week training period at CAJE, facilitated by a visiting mentor from the Yerucham Science Center Robotics Program and one local coach from Lehrman Community Day School. These mentors prepared the participating teachers to implement a robotics curriculum in their respective schools.

"It is particularly gratifying to see our students so excited and proud of their accomplishments as they master mathematical, programming and engineering skills in our fourth-grade robotics class," said Ilana Traub, Media and Technology Specialist, Lehrman Community Day School.

The day-school teachers agree that the program has given their students the opportunity to focus on their strengths, develop new skills and work together to achieve set objectives.

"This robotics program has maximized our students’ ability to become experts in a variety of areas, guided by their own personal interests," said Nancy Penney, media/technology teacher at Scheck Hillel Community School. "From coding to building Lego robots to designing space missions, robotics has fostered and increased collaboration. Students bring their knowledge to help each other and achieve a greater goal. It has been a real joy to learn along with them."

The program also has allowed the teachers to integrate Engineering into Science, Math, and Literacy activities.

To learn more about the Miami Jewish Day School Robotics Program, please contact Audrey Maman, CAJE’s Program Manager for School Markets, at audreymaman@caje-miami.org or 305-576-4030, ext. 141.