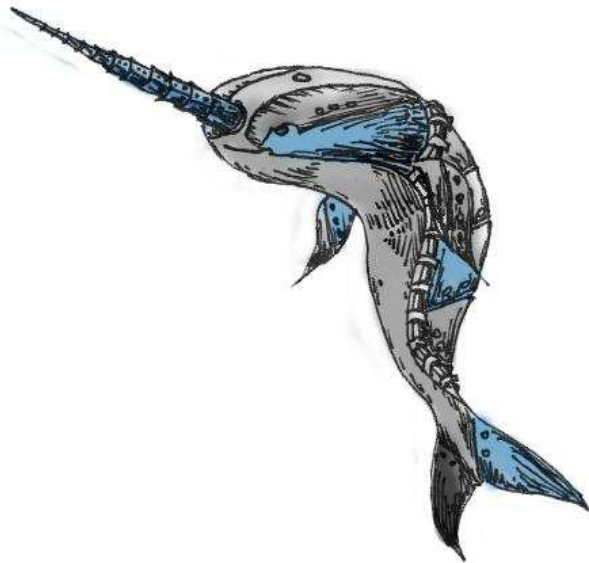


***CANYON CREST ACADEMY  
ALUMINUM NARWHALS  
TEAM 3128***



***BUSINESS PLAN  
2009-2010***

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## **Abstract**

This document sets forth the business plan for the robotics team. The CCA robotics team is registered as Team #3128 ALUMINUM NARWHALS under *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), a non-profit foundation formed for the purpose of stimulating academia in the youth of the world. This business plan summarizes the purpose of Team 3128; its connection to CCA and the surrounding community, its influence on surrounding teams, schools, and businesses as well as lays down the structure with which the team follows. This document also contains important information and sub-documents regarding resources, budget, sponsorship details, balance, management and fund raising tactics. Throughout this document it is made clear the importance of Team 3128 within CCA and the community through a common vision and goal to instill within the youth of the United States a new excitement of technology, innovation, and education.

# 1 Introduction

Canyon Crest Academy (CCA) is a public high school of 1800 students located in the charming neighborhood of Carmel Valley, a suburb of San Diego, California. CCA is a school of choice in the San Dieguito Union High School District with a curriculum that emphasizes the arts and technology. The students are on a 4X4 block schedule, taking only four classes each semester, but studying each subject at an in depth level. While only six years old, CCA has quickly established itself as a dominant force in the world of academics with students competing at the national level on math and academic teams, scoring some of the highest collective AP scores in the country and scoring the highest in San Diego County on the API index. CCA Robotics Team 3128 is supported in part by a vast array of science and technology classes including multiple Advance Placement classes in math, computer programming and physics.

The robotics team at CCA participates in a non-profit program known as *FIRST* (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in the high school division known as FRC (*FIRST* Robotics Competition) as well as FTC (First Tech Challenge). Founded in 1992 by inventor Dean Kamen, *FIRST* has quickly grown to be a worldwide, prestigious, competitive robotics experience for all ages. Between the elementary level *FIRST* Lego League division (FLL), FTC and FRC, thousands of students and adults participate in competitions across the globe each year; culminating in a large, championship competition currently held in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Georgia.

We are a rookie *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team. We formed in September, 2009 with a handful of students, two teacher advisors and several mentors. We spent the preseason recruiting members, fundraising, developing a marketing and business plan, and learning as much as we could about *FIRST* and robotics. We divided ourselves into six sub-teams: programming, design, fabrication, and business, marketing and logistics. We met twice a week to build our skills and grow our team. As of kick-off, January 9, 2010, we had 58 student team members, ten mentors and two teacher advisors.

This document is to serve as organization and documentation of the logistics and business aspects of the CCA robotics team as well as a guide for the future development of Team 3128.

## **1.1 Vision**

The *FIRST* program strives to create a similar environment where students and engineers can work side-by-side. The goal is not simply to have students design and create a competitive robot in six weeks, but to bring together students and professional engineers of all backgrounds in an environment of learning that allows the students to get excited about engineering. Since its inception in 1992, *FIRST* has grown into a nationally renowned, prestigious competition. The experiences that students have are unmatched by any other program in the world. *FIRST* founders are convinced that “the probability that one of [these students] is going to do something spectacular that they would not have done without *FIRST* is almost a guarantee.”<sup>1</sup>

Gracious Professionalism (GP) is a concept founded by *FIRST* that promotes a new meaning for sportsmanship. This idea of generosity stresses helping anyone and everyone, even if they are your opponents in the competition. One of the primary sayings is that winning is good, but even better if the match is close.

CCA Aluminum Narwhals bases its objectives on the *FIRST* vision of creating a life-changing, career molding experience for our student participants that is fun, safe, and embraces the true meaning of Gracious Professionalism. CCA’s objectives truly align with *FIRST* in that they both seek to set high academic standards to assure that students are well prepared for college, and a math or science intensive career.

## **1.2 Our First Year**

*An overview of Team 3128 – The Aluminum Narwhals; who we are, our accomplishments, goals, and struggles.*

Canyon Crest Academy (CCA) rookie Robotics Competition Team 3128 was formed as an after school enrichment program in September, 2009 with a handful of students, one engineering mentor and a computer programming teacher. Our goal was to create a robotics program that would inspire the growth of the science and technology program at our high school.

When CCA opened its doors five years ago as a school of choice, it was intended to be an arts and technology focal point in North County San Diego. The arts program received a large grant at its inception and is now thriving with multiple electives and after school conservatories in six disciplines. But the STEM program struggled with little funding and low enrollment. The school had won a large grant from the State of California, but as the financial crisis hit, the state money never materialized. As a start up club, we had our work cut out for us.

Our first order of business was to recruit students to the team. We tried to recruit a number of students with a broad range of interests and talents, although we specifically told everyone that prior experience was not necessary; we would all learn together. We put posters all over the school and ran announcements in the “Daily Bulletin”, our school’s information newsletter. We

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<sup>1</sup> *FIRST* Promotional Video, [www.usfirst.org](http://www.usfirst.org)

also set up a booth at Club Day and had our mentor team bring their Lunacy robot to help us recruit. We were very successful and before long we had a team roster with 60 plus members.

We spent our first few weeks holding multiple strategy meetings and setting up our team structure. We looked at a lot of other team structures and decided to set up and run our team like a business. We divided ourselves into six sub-teams: Fabrication, Design, Programming, Finance, Marketing and Logistics and elected leaders of each sub-team based upon experience, interest and a willingness to commit the time. We also elected a president. This group of seven became our leadership team. The seven student leaders met several times each week to brainstorm and plan tutorial sessions.

During the preseason, the whole team met two afternoons a week from 3:15pm to 5:00pm and one lunch period per week from 11:30am to 12:15pm for training and strategy sessions. The sessions were led by the seven members of the leadership team. The team worked on projects that would help them to develop the skills necessary to build a complex robot when the competition season kicked off January 9.

Team members received instruction in C++ and JAVA, Solid Works, mechanical and electrical fabrication, business management and marketing. All team members were encouraged to try all areas before settling into one primary sub-team. The student tutors gained substantial leadership skills and proved to be effective role models for the younger team members. All of the students benefited from the technological enrichment opportunity that is based on practical applications.

The leadership team helped to plan the activities for the after-school sessions. The first few times we met after school we worked on team structure. After a few weeks we moved into training sessions. The most challenging thing of all was trying to come up with meaningful activities for all the team members. Also, because of the lack of funding, we did not have a shop in which to work and had to travel to a team member's garage to work.

In addition to recruiting students, we needed engineering mentors and other adults who would help us establish our team and work with us through the season. We turned to the parents of the team members and ultimately got ten parent mentors, seven of whom have engineering or computer science degrees to help us. The mentors attended the preseason afternoon tutorials on a rotating basis to familiarize themselves with the project and the students and to share technological insight as needed.

During the build season, our mentors gave us tremendous encouragement, taught us how to solve problems, and instructed us in how to use the tools and machinery. We learned that we needed to strategize and plan before we even thought about building. We learned the value of building and testing prototype systems before deciding on a final design. We learned to take our time and be exact, so we wouldn't have to do things over. We also learned that mistakes happen, but they can be corrected, as long as you stay focused on the final outcome.

In addition to the mentors, we have two CCA high school teachers working with the team. Stephen Yip, with a dual degree in physics and industrial engineering, is working with the mechanical and electrical build group. Michael Remington has a degree in computer

programming and is tutoring the programming and design groups. Both Mr. Yip and Mr. Remington helped tutor the team at all training sessions. Additionally, CCA Business and Marketing teacher Brian Baum was available to the team on a consulting basis.

In addition, our team was mentored by Team 2109, San Dieguito Academy, a sister school in the same district with a veteran team in its fourth year (Team Paradox). We also worked with San Diego's High Tech High (Team 1538, the Holy Cows) which hosted several workshops for CCA including one session on how to set up and operate the Compact RIO system. We also received invaluable assistance and advice from Escondido Charter High School (Team 2839, the Daedalus Project), EastLake High School (Team 2543, the Titanbots) and the Preus School at UCSD (Team 812, the Midnight Mechanics). These teams were all very generous with their time and assistance.

One of our first objectives was to create a business plan which included an operating budget and a fundraising strategy. The biggest challenge was the fundraising. Probably the best move we made was recruiting a team parent who had a background in nonprofit fundraising and grant writing. She worked with the business team and taught them the best strategies for approaching corporate and community sponsors.

The team received sponsorship from a number of corporate and community sponsors including NASA, Qualcomm, ViaSat, SAIC, Nordson Asymtek, Live Fit Magazine and the Canyon Crest Academy Foundation. In addition, the team received donations from more than 50 individuals and families. The team also raised \$500 by selling Narwhal hats. Altogether, the Finance team raised an amazing \$51,000!

The first objective of the marketing team was to develop our team vision and select our team name, logo, motto, and colors. Our official team name is Canyon Crest Academy Robotics Team 3128, but we are more affectionately known as the Aluminum Narwhals. We picked this name because Narwhals are rare and often thought of as mythical creatures of the sea. We also wanted to heighten awareness of the environment and promote a "Go Green" theme with our marketing. Our team motto is "Pointing the Way to Robotics". Our team colors are Royal Blue and Silver which reflects our school's proximity to, and our love for, the ocean. Our team cheer is "BLAAARRRG!" which means "GO TEAM... You're Awesome" in Narwhal.

The marketing team created an ambitious to-do list at the beginning of the year and divided up the tasks among its members. To date the marketing team has created a website, created several videos of our team's progress through the season, designed team t-shirts, designed a competition banner and buttons, made four display posters and a tri-fold brochure, created business cards and cards for the competitions describing what our robot can do, and created a Facebook page and a Twitter account. We also sewed a Narwhal mascot outfit and Narwhal capes for all of our team members at the competitions.

As the year progressed, we developed a complete marketing and community outreach plan that encompassed many of our original goals: building a thriving and energetic technology program at our high school, expanding to two middle schools and starting FLL teams, involving the

community of San Diego, working with engineering mentors from our corporate sponsors, and, all the while, promoting environmental awareness.

Meanwhile, our programming team was responsible for selecting the program and writing the code to operate the robot. Additionally, the programming team took responsibility for connecting the C-RIO compact system to the robot. Initially, the programming team tried to work in C++, but ultimately switched to JAVA when they all agreed it was easier to work with. The team also purchased a National Instruments Compact RIO development board in November. This allowed the electrical build team and the software development team to gain valuable experience with the actual hardware prior to the build season.

The logistics team is responsible for all of the operations of the team including coordinating the sub-teams, safety, rules, membership, scheduling, travel, organizing the pit crew, and above all, food. The Narwhals always seem to be hungry! One very notable project that the logistics team coordinated is our “Coopertition Specialists” package, which includes a Flash Drive Gift for all teams in our division at the Championship, an online scouting report, an online tools and parts loaner database, a guide to Atlanta, a safety guide, and a “Go Green” tip sheet.

By Kick-off 2010, we had a fully trained fabrication team and a smaller but equally apt marketing team, who put a great deal of work into our team image and publicity. When Breakaway was finally released, we also had an eager team of programmers and designers ready to plunge into the newest FIRST Robotics challenge. Our after school sessions now ran three hours every day Monday through Friday, and eight hours on Saturdays. We started with building a strategy, then designing the robot. We did some prototyping, and slowly the conceptual image of our robot emerged. The biggest challenge we faced was that our ideas were greater than our skills and tools allowed.

While the robot was evolving, the construction of the practice field, pit structure and crate began as well. There was enough work to keep everyone busy, and scheduling what everyone had to do kept the leadership team busy as well. We created a project schedule for build season and met the milestones each week. A lot of extra work was required on weekends to keep us on schedule. Slowly, and with many debates, several prototypes and testing, we emerged with a rough four wheeled drive robot that could hoist itself off the ground on the tower bar using a scissor lift and winch.

One of the greatest moments in our build season was seeing the scissor lift reach up and grab the bar for the first time in our practice field. We had one very emotionally charged low moment when we realized that our robot was too top heavy to drive over the bumps. After a few tense sessions correcting that problem, the robot was completed, and ready for Team San Diego Expo at Madison High school. It is one of the greatest feelings to see the project that has taken up your entire life operational for the first time and performing at an unexpected level.

On campus, our robotics team is very popular. Our club has more members than any other club at our school. We wear our Narwhal hats and share our experiences with our friends. We are really looking forward to demonstrating our robot at the next pep rally with all of the sports teams. This year was really about becoming the team and getting organized. Our goals for next

year include expanding our positive team experience with more community outreach activities, building a robotics lab, and continuing to promote a love of engineering and the environment.

### **1.3 Future**

In the coming years, using our continuous improvement strategy, we will continue to revise and improve the safety program. Safety training will be conducted during the off-season and future robots will be designed with more safety in mind. Newly instituted procedures will become more detailed and more routine as we learn the value of team communication and building student confidence. Our infrastructure has begun to take shape, so continuing to strengthen that important aspect of the organization is essential if we want to work together more efficiently.

We will continue to encourage more student-to-student tutoring so that participation in robotics results in raised grades rather than dropped ones. Educational projects will be developed by mentors and veteran team members to familiarize students with tools and jobs before the build season.

We will have more team building activities that include mentors, such as team dinners, movie nights, or paintball outings. Throughout the year it is important to remember that a balance of work and play is needed to stay healthy.

Team 3128 would like to mentor an FRC team and an FTC team in our community.

## **2 Objective**

### **2.1 Mission**

*“Our mission is to provide a positive high school team experience through robotics while inspiring intellectual creativity, fostering a passion for science, technology and engineering, and developing critical thinking, problem solving and team building skills.”*

Team 3128 works to develop students who are strong in math, science and engineering and dedicated to pursuing a rigorous academic college experience. Through mentor, parent and teacher support from both Canyon Crest Academy and Team 3128, the students of the CCA Robotics team are pushed towards a rewarding and demanding career. The students are then inspired to continue the mission and spread this inspiration to younger students, so that they may experience even greater motivation and academic opportunities.

### **2.2 Member Benefit**

For many of the team members, the experience of *FIRST* has been described as ‘life-changing.’ It made them feel a part of a team, and gave them a new direction in their lives. Many started the program skeptical of what was to be and came away with great anticipation for the next year.

Students are inspired throughout participation in *FIRST* to pursue their education. The emphasis placed on going to college is greater than any other student program offered in high schools today. By allowing students to work side by side with real engineers, they can get a firsthand glimpse of what the real world of engineering is like. This allows students to explore their career options much more, before they are required to make a decision about the path for their future.

Great emphasis is also placed on sportsmanship, safety and fun. The lure of the competition comes in the amount of joy that students experience when they have completed a robot. What keeps them in the competition is level of excitement and understanding of importance of the other aspects, such as the sportsmanship, safety, and education. The students that participate in *FIRST* graduate from high school more mature, ready, and enthusiastic about college. *FIRST* is creating the future and making it exciting in the process.

All of this fits very well with the goals of Canyon Crest Academy. Students that have participated in *FIRST* Robotics and have attended CCA seem to get almost a ‘double-dose’ of this education inspiration. Students leaving both of these programs seem to have a much stronger interest in engineering, and a much better idea of exactly what they wish to do with their future than graduates of just one of these programs. CCA and *FIRST* Robotics compliment each other through their inspiration of students very well.

## **2.3 Community Benefit**

In our rookie year, we have concentrated on building a team and building a Robot. We are also trying to help develop more interest in the STEM program at our high school. To do this, we have visited several middle schools in our district to talk about the benefits of *FIRST* and STEM education. We have been very well received by the students and staff alike and we are working with them to set up FLL programs.

We want to continue the growth we have begun as a team and seek ways to stay involved even though the school year is quickly coming to an end. We have brainstormed some ideas to become more involved with the community. Here are some of our plans:

We will be walking in the Great Strides Cystic Fibrosis fundraiser, May 15, 2010 which helps raise money for Cystic Fibrosis research. We will take our robot and encourage all of the children to drive it.

We will attend the San Diego County Fair in June, 2010 and exhibit and demonstrate our robot at the Team San Diego Expo. We look forward to showing the greater San Diego community how our robot works and what design strategies we used to build it.

We will participate in several parades over the next few months, including the Mother Goose parade in November, 2010 which celebrates children.

We will take our robot to several middle and elementary schools to exhibit and demonstrate its functions. We would like to mentor a *FIRST* Lego League team, as well. In addition, we are also interested in running workshops and potentially a summer camp for middle and elementary school children.

All of these experiences will give us the opportunity to not only talk about our robotics team, but to inform our audiences and community about *FIRST*.

## **3 Implementation**

### **3.1 Program Organization**

Team 3128 prides itself on being a student-run organization that develops an overwhelmingly student-built robot. This is an extremely difficult task to undertake in the context of *FIRST*.

Our team is very well organized, all tasks are delegated to sub-teams whose sole job is to build or develop a specific component or document. Everything the team undertakes is delegated and coordinated within the team. All of our mentors are professionals who have massive amounts of experience in their respective fields, and as such, they work to inform students about what exactly they are working on.

The team is led by a student president, elected by the student team members. This student must be an upper grade student with exceptional communication and people management skills, have experience in all areas of the team operation and have completed at least one competition season

with the team. He or she is responsible for coordinating all of the vice-presidents and their sub-team activities. The faculty advisor, the team president and the lead mentor finalize all primary decisions. The advisor is informed of the actions of the team, sub-teams, mentors, parents, and anything else that may be within the range of concern for the good of the team. He or she has the authority to make the final decision in any circumstance, and does so at his or her own discretion for the primary purpose of overseeing the big picture and insuring the safety of every team member. The lead mentor, lead parent, and team president communicate between the advisor and the mentors, parents, and students respectfully. It is through this model that it is insured that each person involved with the team is informed at all times. The lead parent also sends email updates to all mentors, parents and students at least one to two times a week regarding schedule, event plans, or any other information pertinent to the team.

Vice-presidents are upper grade students who have substantial prior experience in their area or have completed at least one competition season with the team. This student is responsible for managing a sub-team as well as training a younger student to take over the duties they have performed upon their graduation. This structure ensures that there are no gaps in team organization each year when the seniors graduate. The vice-president is a student responsible for the primary communication between mentors, students, and the advisors. This student is very aware of (specifically) what the students are doing at all times, and insuring that they are safe, and on task throughout each meeting. The head mentor is a volunteer who takes on the responsibility for coordinating all mentors, mentor meetings, and communication from the mentors to the advisor if needed. The head parent organizes the parent support for the team by assigning parents to be responsible for activities such as team dinners, transportation, apparel, etc. The primary reason for this organization is to emulate the structure of a business so that students can receive some experience in a work-like environment.

### **3.2 Program Execution**

The first week of the build season, following the kick-off, is designated for robot design and strategy development. The team is dispersed into three even design groups, in no particular arrangement, and each group is expected to develop a concept for a successful strategy and robot concept for the new game. The last meeting of the week is reserved for presentations by each group. During the next meeting the design and strategy is discussed and decided on after which, the team is dispersed into the sub-teams which will remain for the rest of the build season and into the competitions.

Sub-team leaders, who are generally also team captains, are responsible for the smooth operation and functionality of their group. Each day, sub-teams are required to document their progress, struggles, and plans for the next day. This insures that progress is being made, and also that everyone can find out what is going on and know what needs to be done next. These sub-team leaders are also responsible for training a younger member to be the sub-team leader in the next year. This insures that even as students graduate and move on, the team will continue to grow and mature. Each sub-team is also supervised by a mentor who aids in insuring the safety of all sub-team members when using power tools and acts as a guide and source of information for education of the concepts being used.

### **3.3 Resources**

Some of the resources that Aluminum Narwhals uses are its community volunteers. Volunteers include our parent team, our mentor team, our students, and our faculty. The parent team is very useful because they help manage our sub-teams, overall organization and handle affairs such as travel preparations, money acquisition, and team activities.

Many engineers from our local community donate their time and expertise to our team. We also are granted access to their machine shops and/or materials including assistance from professional machinists in the fabrication of the parts for our robot.

A number of local San Diego corporations were generous enough to sponsor our team so that we are able afford to attend the San Diego regional competition as well as the championship competition in Atlanta if we are invited. We acquired these sponsors by contacting them through email or letter, offering a demonstration and/or presentation at their location, and asked if they would be interested in sponsoring our team. We wrote a number of grant proposals, as well. We plan to expand our horizons further to larger companies. With experience, we believe it possible to convince a number of large corporations to sponsor our team through a long-term arrangement.

## 4 Funding

### 4.1 Annual Budget

**CCA FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION TEAM BUDGET 09-10**  
**Revised January 20, 2010**

#### Contributed Support

Member Dues—We asked every team member to make a contribution to the team. This was a voluntary donation.	\$ 4,000	
Individual Contributions—Individuals from the community gave financial support to our team.	\$ 4,000	
CCA Foundation Grant—The parent fundraising group for CCA gave us a grant.	\$ 5,000	
Student Fundraisers—We sold Narwhal hats to students and friends.	<u>\$ 500</u>	<u>\$13,500</u>
Corporate Support—We applied for grants and received the following:		
NASA	\$ 5,500	
Dean Kamen	\$ 1,000	
Qualcomm	\$ 5,000	
ViaSat	\$ 5,000	
SAIC	\$ 15,000	
Nordson Asymtek	\$ 2,500	
Other	\$ 3,500	
Total	<u>\$ 7,500</u>	<u>\$37,500</u>

#### Total Contributed Support

**\$51,000**

#### Team Expenses

San Diego Regional Competition Entry Fee—This fee included our basic kit of parts to build the robot.	\$ 6,500	
Atlanta National Championship Entry Fee	\$ 5,000	
Robot Build Parts—These were parts we purchased in addition to the kit of parts.	\$ 3,500	
Tools and Shop Equipment—We had to purchase some tools and equipment that were not available at the school or the machine shop we used.	\$ 2,500	
Marketing—See the marketing budget attached.	\$ 5,500	
Teacher Stipend—For the two teacher advisors.	\$ 6,000	
Travel—To Atlanta if we win the Rookie All-Star Award!	\$ 20,750	
Robot Shipping	<u>\$ 1,250</u>	<u>\$ 51,000</u>

#### Total Team Expenses

**\$ 51,000**

#### Net Income

**\$ --**

## 4.2 Marketing Budget

### CCA Robotics Team 3128 Marketing Budget 2009-2010

Team Gifts		\$1,500
Website—The annual website hosting fee.		\$60
Video—Use of professional equipment and studio.		\$500
Poster—For community outreach events.		\$20
Banners—For competitions and community outreach events.		\$200
Brochures—To hand out at events.		\$200
Business Cards—To hand out at events.		\$200
Buttons—To share at competitions.		\$700
Stickers—To decorate our hard hats.		\$40
Spirit Wear		
	T-Shirts	\$800
	Hard Hats	\$230
	Other Hats	\$500
	Pom Poms, etc.	\$300
Judges' gifts		\$250
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$5,500</b>

## 4.3 Sponsorship Levels

Sponsor Level	Donation Amount	Benefits
Crown Jewel*	\$5,000 and above	Platinum plus your organization will be part of the name we use at events. This name is announced when we are on the field.
Platinum*	\$2,500 - \$4,999	Gold plus the name of your organization on our competition T-shirts, banner, competition pit, and ROBOT!!
Gold*	\$1,000 - \$2,499	Silver plus the name of your organization on our Team Brochures
Silver*	\$500 - \$999	Your name listed as a donor on our website with a picture of your logo, a company description and a hyperlink to your company's web page.

\*Along with other benefits, all donors will receive a year end report of the team's accomplishments at the close of the season and the deep gratitude of the entire team for the help. Sponsoring the team is an excellent way to demonstrate community involvement and heighten awareness of science, technology, engineering and math education. Major corporate sponsors of the Aluminum Narwhals will be announced along with the team's name at the Regional Competitions in addition to having their logo displayed on the team's T-shirts, banners, brochures, website, and, of course, the robot! Sponsors names and logos will be featured in all media releases and can be seen during multiple television appearances. FIRST Robotics has been featured on FOX, NBC, KUSI, CBS and in the Union Tribune and a number of other

community newspapers and magazines. FIRST's Regional and National Championship competitions are also broadcast on national television (NASA TV).

If there is a surplus of funds, the money will go towards helping students pay for their flight costs to the Championship Competition in Atlanta, Georgia, and the remainder will be set aside for the next year. In the circumstance of fundraising shortfall, it may become necessary for team members and their families to contribute towards their own travel expenses, such as room fees, food and entry costs. Focus for fundraising growth will be placed on community fundraisers that are easily repeatable on an annual or biannual basis as well as acquiring long-term sponsors that will consistently contribute to our team each year. Plans for team expansion include developing enough of these income sources in order to support the primary costs for the younger teams that we hope to mentor. This will allow the FIRST community in our area to continue to grow.