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Cornwall students fundraising for 'once-in-a-lifetime' US Lego competition trip

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Image source: PAMEDIA

A group of year six students at a school in Cornwall hope to raise enough money for a “once-in-a-lifetime” trip to the US after securing a coveted spot at an international Lego competition.

The group of 11-year-olds – who refer to themselves as the Penpol Pumpkins, because they are from Penpol School in Cornwall – are Ada, Jenna, Caio, Miles, James S, James B, Felix, Ernie, Ethan and Piran.

They fended off competition from students across the country and have been invited to represent Britain in the First Lego League, in Massachusetts in the US from June 9 to June 11, where they hope to show that their Lego robot is the best of the bunch against 96 other teams from around the world in the “robot games”.



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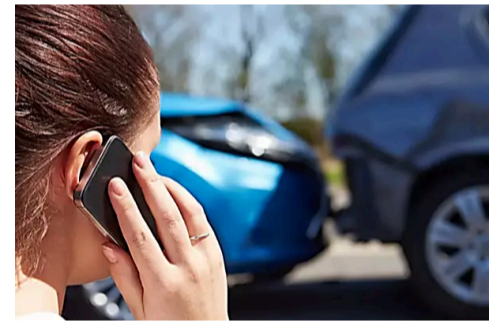
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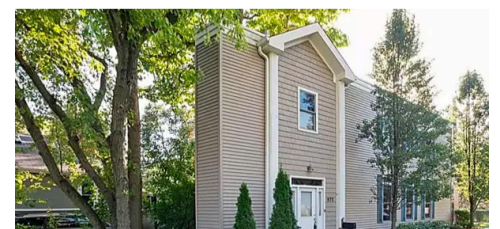
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The contest sees children from primary and secondary schools compete using Lego robots, as well as presenting an innovative solution to an “energy-themed” problem in their community.

The Penpol Pumpkins focused on food waste after seeing how many pumpkins were wasted after Halloween, and got in touch with the council to offer their support to an upcoming food waste collection service.

Last month, the team got invited to the British finals in Harrogate, where they impressed the judges so much they were told: “This was one of the best presentations I’ve ever seen in all the years of doing this.”

Caio told the PA news agency that when the team found out they had been invited to the competition in the US, they were “surprised”.

A video taken by their teacher Jacob Woolcock showed all the Penpol Pumpkins jumping up and down and smiling.



Jenna, left to right, Ada, Felix and Caio confer with referees (Penpol School/Jacob Woolcock/PA) “I got them to film a video and had words written on a screen”, Mr Woolcock, 32, head of computing and digital learning at Penpol School, told PA.

“They were not sure what was coming up until they read it and their reactions made me quite emotional.”

Mr Woolcock reminisced about taking part in the same competition when he was in year nine.

“I remember my teacher giving us the freedom to do it and when I became a teacher, I wanted to be like that and give them this experience,” he said.

“However, when I took part, our team were rubbish and we didn’t win anything and it was a disaster, but I’m now living vicariously through them.”

Ernie told PA that the group had used the programming tool Lego Spike Prime to make the robot move – which they had worked on over a two-year period – and he particularly enjoyed teaching others on his team how to code.



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