

FIRST LEGO League (FLL) is an international organization for kids ages 9-14 that promotes imaginative thinking and teamwork. FLL releases a challenge each year that requires teams to research a real-life problem and develop an innovative solution. This year's challenge is "Animal Allies" - identify a problem when humans and animals interact and develop a solution to improve the interaction.

The Tornado Chasers spent a couple of hours discussing animals they were interested in and ultimately chose honeybees. They then spent several hours researching and speaking with experts to identify various issues with honeybee/human interaction. While there were many issues to choose from (mites, colony collapse, hive beetles, to name a few) the boys were most interested in the issue that was most painful - bee stings! They then developed their innovative solution, the dual purpose venom sac remover/pheromone masker - official name still being discussed.

They also have to present their research and solution to a panel of judges, and compete in the robot aspect of the challenge. The robot challenge involves building and programming a Lego Mindstorms robot to solve a set of missions based on real life issues. All parts of the challenge should be completed while honoring FLL's Core Values, which are a great bundle of knowledge in themselves. Some of the Core Values are:

- We honor the spirit of friendly competition.
- What we discover is more important than what we win.
- We share our experiences with others.
- We display Gracious Professionalism® and Coopertition® in everything we do.

Thank you again for giving the boys an opportunity to speak at the HABA meeting. It was a valuable experience for them!