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North Texas students win top honors in international robotics competition

The community-based group 8565 Technibots represented Team USA in the FIRST Global Challenge, earning a slew of awards partly owed to their creation of a robot that collects plastic waste from the ocean.



Members of the award-winning Team USA that competed in the 2021 FIRST Global Challenges included: Row 1, left to right: Changers Fu (Lebanon Trail High School in Frisco), Ellen Sun (Coppell HS), Otto Beall (Plano East Senior HS), Derek He (Plano West Senior HS), Byron Li (Plano West Senior HS), Anthony Wang (St. Mark's School of Texas in Dallas). Row 2: Melody Hu (The Hockaday School), Pravel Gu (coach, Amazon), Fang Wang (coach, IBM), Austin Liu (Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science, or TAMS, at the University of North Texas). Row 3: John Dunbar (Plano Senior HS), Grace Zou (Jasper HS), Michael Dunning (Mesquite

BGC), Max Fan (Lebanon Trail HS), Mila Mangnum (Oakcliff BGC), Hrithik Maniyambeth (Frisco HS). (Photo Courtesy of TEAM USA organizers)



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A community group of North Texas students recently became the first U.S. team to win the top award in the history of FIRST Global, an international robotics competition that **began in 2017**, according to an announcement by organizers.

The students are part of 8565 Technibots, which represented Team USA in the competition.

FIRST Global is a nonprofit charity that hosts an Olympics-style, international robotics competition in a different country each year. Participating teams complete three challenges over a 12-week period and design projects that include solving world problems.

Part of the team's work involved designing the "Plastic Pirate," a robot that collects plastic waste from the ocean's surface.

Team USA received the following awards:

- Grand prize of the tournament, the Global Discover and Recover Award, with partner Team Zimbabwe, as the overall winning alliance.
- Gold medal for the Global Grand Challenge Award in Environment category.
- Silver medal for the Global Challenge Award for phase 1 in the Environment category.

The team included students from Plano ISD and Frisco ISD, community groups, and other school districts.

Fang Wang, a senior software engineer with IBM Watson Health and Pravel Gu of Amazon served as Team USA coaches.

In addition to their competitions, the team participates in community outreach work. Using their resources and robotics knowledge, the team in 2020 donated

more than 2,000 face shields and 3,700 ear guards to over 40 area hospitals and clinics.

Information about the Technibots is available [online](#), as is more information about [FIRST Global](#).

Team United States of America and Team Zimba...



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