



Café Scientifique Española wins robotics competition

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In 2013, Café Scientifique New Mexico hosted a robotics night during which engineers from Los Alamos National Laboratory and UNM-Los Alamos regaled teenagers with captivating stories about robots.

Fast forward three years: inspired by those stories, many of those teens are now making their own robots and competing in—and winning—international robotics competitions.

Pitted against teams from across the world, the robotics team from Española's Café Scientifique placed first at the 2016 RoboRave International on May 7–8 in Albuquerque. With the win, the team is qualified to compete at RoboRave International in Ishikawa, Japan, in November 2016.

"I have the pleasure of working with a group of intelligent teens who were able to participate in an amazing opportunity and display their hard work in STEM while representing their community," says Café Scientifique Coordinator Savannah Trujillo.

The team, comprised of four local high school teens—senior Sergio Madrid and junior Cristian Madrid of McCurdy High School and juniors Emmett Moulton and Liam Silverman of Taos Academy—was challenged to design, build, and program a robot capable of completing an elevated maze in three minutes or fewer. The faster the team could complete the task, the higher the overall score.

"Basically you have your robot navigate a raised wooden path that consists of straight-a-ways and different angles," Moulton explains. "We measured, input information to the computer program, modified with practice runs, and kept track of successes. This allowed for a much faster and more efficient method of programming the robot."

These boys are no strangers to success—they also won the 2014 RoboRave International competition in Albuquerque. "We were very happy to have won first place for the second time and were very thankful for all the support from our team leaders," Moulton says. "Roborave is an 'a-maze-ing' event, and our team highly recommends it to anyone who is interested in robotics or programming."

The Café Scientifique Española Robotics Team is starting to fundraise to build its program and travel to international competitions. [Visit its crowdfunding site here.](#)

Española's Café Scientifique robotics team in 2014 and in 2016.

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