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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Future Engineers and Innovators Unleash Their Brilliance: Ten Holy Apostles Middle School First Lego League Students move on to compete at the *FIRST*® LEGO® League Wisconsin Championship, January 21, 2024, in Madison, WI.**

[New Berlin, WI] — Ten Holy Apostles School Middle School students who have competed in *FIRST*® LEGO® League Challenge, a kids' robotics competition, under the team name Ninja Turtles #46252, have earned a spot at the *FIRST*® LEGO® League Wisconsin Championship on January 21, 2024, in Madison. They join 25 other incredible kids' robotics teams from every corner of Wisconsin, representing the top 10% ranked teams in the state.

Members of the Ninja Turtles have been exploring robotics curriculum for three years, and most competed together in *FIRST* robotic competitions for only two seasons. Mrs. Lisa Laabs, head coach of the Ninja Turtles, started the Holy Apostles robotics program over eight years ago. She has expressed immense pride in the team's achievements, saying, "The Ninja Turtles have done an awesome job developing and presenting their Innovative Project, answering questions from the judges, and running their robot for the Robot Game. These students should be so proud of all their iterations since the sectional competition back in December. We are grateful to *FIRST*® LEGO® League for providing a platform for our students to showcase their creativity, problem-solving skills, and passion for robotics."

In *FIRST*® LEGO® League Challenge, children are immersed in real-world science and technology challenges. In addition to building autonomous LEGO® robots that perform a series of missions, teams complete an Innovation Project in which they design their solution to a current scientific question or problem. In the 2023-2024 MASTERPIECE<sup>SM</sup> season, which began in August 2023, FLL teams imagined and innovated new ways to create and communicate art and hobbies across the globe. The Ninja Turtles Innovation Project created a band app that teaches kids how to learn to play an instrument of their choice.

In November and December 2023, FLL teams competed at regional tournaments around Wisconsin, where judges provided valuable feedback on their robot, code, and invention. At the Robot Game table, they raced against the clock for a personal best score and the chance to advance to the next level, the sectional tournament. At sectional tournaments, the top-ranked teams earned invitations to the Wisconsin Championship.

At a Milwaukee regional tournament, Ninja Turtles won the Robot Design award (scoring a team high of 240) and were nominated for the Champions Award. This advanced the Ninja Turtles to a sectional tournament. At the Waukesha sectional tournament, they won 2nd place for Core Values, scored 270 points for the Robot Game, and gave a solid presentation for the judges about their Innovation project about creating a Band app for students. Mrs. Laabs also won the Coach/Mentor Award. These sectional accomplishments secured their spot in the state competition.

The mission of *FIRST*® is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in exciting mentor-based robotics programs. These programs build STEM skills, inspire innovation, and foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication, and leadership.

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