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For Immediate Release:

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## Kids learn robotics, thanks to grant, Cyberkids

**Newton, NC, Dec. 29, 2014:**

All seven locations of Catawba County Library have become robotics learning labs this fall, thanks to a grant administered by the State Library of North Carolina.

A total of 52 fifth-through-twelfth graders are about to complete a free Cyberkids Robotics course using Lego Mindstorm EV3 robots. The exercise stimulated learning in math, physics, computer skills and problem solving. As well as leadership and teamwork skills. Each robotics team will go on to mentor other s who wish to learn simple robotics.

Siobhan Loendorf, assistant library director, coordinated the robotics project for the library system.

“The program was offered free to the students. The same instruction at a summer camp or elsewhere might have cost their family \$300 each,” she said. “This grant allowed students to participate regardless of their family finances.”

Bill Kent, vice president for Cyberkids Robotics of Lenoir, said his not-for-profit company helps kids explore possible career paths with some hands-on experience.

“Working with the robots can turn a kid on to computer programming and engineering, for example. He or she may go on to study those subjects in college and eventually work in those fields. Cyberkids experience looks good on a student’s resume,” Kent said. “On the other hand, some of the kids will see that this isn’t for them and they know to pursue something else.”

Library teams have formed at Newton, Conover, Claremont, Maiden, St. Stephens, Sherrills Ford-Terrell and Southwest (Mountain View). Each library team has created robots to perform basic tasks on a model course.

The teams will compete for countywide honors on Feb. 21.

The learning program was made possible thanks to a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under provisions of the federal Library Services and Technology Act administered by the State Library of North Carolina.

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**About:** *The Catawba County Library System, headquartered in Newton, NC, serves the citizens of Catawba County with seven branches throughout the county and is a year-round, integral provider of early literacy and lifelong learning. In addition to traditional services, the system provides a full complement of computer and digital services, classes and support to bridge the digital divide, empower job seekers, and enhance community quality of life and economic health.*