

## **Young Engineers, Real Solutions: Wildcats@CHP Earn Double Honors at 2026 FLL Tournament**

When Cedar Hill Preparatory School's First Lego League team walked into the Menlo Park Mashup Tournament on May 16, they carried with them months of late afternoons, iterative testing, and a project built entirely from their own curiosity. Wildcats@CHP returned home with double honors — earning 4th Place recognition in both the Innovation Project Award and the Motivate Award among more than 30 competing teams from across New Jersey.

### **A Project Born from Curiosity**

At the heart of their performance was *Archeo Lens*, a student-driven Innovation Project connected to this season's UNEARTHED™ theme. From identifying a real-world problem to designing a prototype solution and presenting findings to a panel of industry expert judges, every stage of the process belonged to the students. There was no blueprint handed to them — just a challenge, a team, and the drive to figure it out.

### **Competing on Every Front**

Wildcats@CHP didn't just show up for one category. The team competed across all four FLL pillars — Robot Design, Robot Game, Innovation Project, and Core Values — building and programming their robot through rounds of testing and walking into every judging room prepared to defend every decision they made.

The Motivate Award, presented to teams that demonstrate outstanding growth, character, and Core Values throughout the season, was a fitting second honor for a group that embodied exactly that from day one.

### **In Their Coach's Words**

"What stood out about this team was that every stage of this process was completely student-driven," said Madhulika Verma, Technology Teacher and FLL team coach. "They didn't just build a robot — they identified a real-world problem, designed a solution, and walked into that tournament ready to defend every decision they made."

### **The Team**

Tournament competitors Nyle Thaver, Snehal Nadella, Akhil Kota, Ian Lee, and Ishaan Rajiv represented Wildcats@CHP on the floor, while Shivad Desai, Afzaal Mohamed, Yajur Subramaniam, Aiden Betancourt, James Nguyen, Dylan Lee, and Jonathan Li contributed to the research and development that powered *Archeo Lens* from concept to competition.

The team was guided throughout the season by coaches Madhulika Verma and Hemlata Iyengar, both Technology Teachers at Cedar Hill Prep, whose mentorship helped shape the team's technical foundation and competitive readiness.

## **What's Next**

For Wildcats@CHP, this tournament is not a finish line — it is a foundation. Cedar Hill Preparatory School remains committed to growing its robotics program and nurturing the next generation of thinkers, builders, and problem-solvers.

*Cedar Hill Preparatory School is a Preschool to Grade 8 International Baccalaureate Candidate school located at 152 Cedar Grove Lane, Somerset, NJ. For more information, visit [www.cedarhillprep.com](http://www.cedarhillprep.com) or call 732-356-5400.*