

# Robotics team offers students chance to get creative

By Mike Albanese  
The Chronicle-News

While it may not be Rock'em-Sock'em Robots, students at Trinidad Middle School involved in the new robotics team are getting the chance to express their creativity and build working robots.

The program, which is new to the middle school this semester, was paid for by a \$2,500 donation from the KISS Institute for Practical Robotics.

There are 11 students in the program, many of whom are also involved in the middle school's MESA program.

Middle school teacher and robotics club organizer Angela Hadaway said students involved in MESA asked if components could be added to the middle school's MESA program.

While students in MESA also are involved in the robotics club, Hadaway said it made more sense for the two programs to be run separately.

"When we really looked into what both programs involved, and the students who were interested in each program, it made more sense logistically to run them as separate programs," Hadaway said. "We do have MESA students on the robotics team, but it is open to other students at (Trinidad Middle School) as well."

Currently the robotics team is working on building a game table and learning how to program their robots for a competition in March.

Later this year, the robotics team members will be taking their skills to Denver to compete with other robotics teams in the state in a BotBall competition.

According to Botball.com, Botball consists of teams of students pitting their robots against each other head-to-head in a fast paced, non-destructive regional tournament.

Also, the robots created by the students are programmed to maneuver on the game board without the need for remote control.

She added this is the first time Colorado has had a competition of this kind, with eight teams competing in the tournament this year.

From now until the competition, Hadaway said her and the team will be looking to perfect their robots and programming skills.

"The competition changes each year, so we will work on the one next year as soon as we hear what the new competition is," she said. "Between now and then, we will work on perfecting our programming skills."

For students not active in the robotics team, Hadaway said the club offers students who love to



Mike Albanese/The Chronicle-News

Trinidad Middle School student Ryan Giron works on constructing a robot for the robotics team's upcoming tournament in Denver next month.

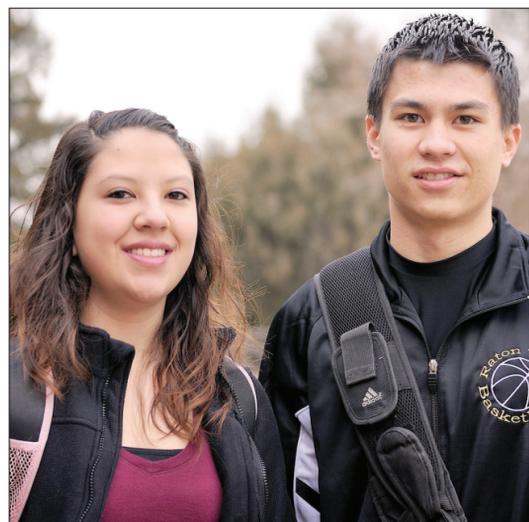
solve problems the ability to do just that, as well as learning basic computer

and programming skills. The robotics team meets Tuesdays after school at

Trinidad Middle School. Contact Mike Albanese at malbanese@trinidadchroni-

clenews.com or 719-846-3311 ex 207.

# 'Texting Kills' program aims to help keep teen drivers safe



Tim Keller/Special to The Chronicle-News

Cheyann Duran and Mark Hightree brought the "Texting Kills" program to Raton High School last week, the first stop on a tour of area schools.

By Tim Keller  
Special to The Chronicle-News

RATON — In the first of a series of programs touring area high schools, the students of Raton High School last Thursday received the sobering message that "Texting Kills."

It was appropriate to begin at Raton High: a fatal collision in downtown Raton during the city's annual Electric Light Parade Dec. 4, 2010, allegedly caused by a teen driver's texting, led Raton High School students to bring the cautionary program to their peers.

Freshman Cheyann Duran and junior Mark Hightree learned of the Texting Kills program last fall at a Denver conference for members of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America. The

downtown tragedy still fresh in their minds, the pair decided to bring the program to northeastern New Mexico as an FCCLA service project.

A Raton girl, 17 at the time, is accused of vehicular homicide after prosecutors say records prove she was texting before and during the time she ran into a Raton man and his daughter as they crossed South Second Street during the parade. Both victims were severely injured; the man died in a Denver hospital two days later.

Thursday's Texting Kills program at Raton High School was co-sponsored by the Northern New Mexico/Southern Colorado Regional Trauma Advisory Council, based at Miners Colfax Medical Center in Raton. Council representatives participating in the

program included trauma nurses Val Ridolfi and Hattie Jolly of MCMC, and EMTs Nate Lay of Cimarron EMS, Anthony Trujillo of Springer EMS, and Dusty Russell of Folsom EMS.

Also present were representatives of Raton Police Department, Raton Fire Department, Colfax County Sheriff's Department, and New Mexico State Police.

As students filed into the RHS gym for the afternoon assembly, each was handed a packet containing facts about distracted driving, a written test, and a pledge for students to sign, committing themselves to refrain from texting and other distractions while driving.

Duran and FCCLA state president Makayla Mondragon presented a multi-media program to

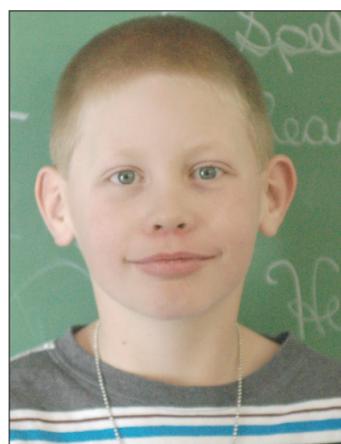
educate the students on the dangers of texting while driving. Then 14 students were randomly selected to fill 14 empty chairs on the gym floor. Lay then announced to the audience that the 14 students represented the number of teens killed in the United States each day due to texting while driving.

With the local vehicular homicide charges fresh in their minds, Raton's teens didn't need much reminding of the dangers.

As nurses, EMts, police officers, and FCCLA students walked through the grandstands collecting the students' pledges to not text and drive, each pledging student was given a rubber thumb ring to serve as a constant reminder of the pledge.

## STUDENT OF THE WEEK:

BRAYDEN GRIFFIS



Brayden Griffis is a second grader at Grace Christian School.

He is maintaining a 95 average in all of his subjects. He really enjoys science and health class.

He also likes the elective classes at Grace, doing art, 4-H and P.E. at the Community Center each week.

In his free time, Brayden likes to ride his bike and play with his little sister. He hopes to keep getting his good grades all year.

He is the son of Shane and Deborah Griffis.

## Holy Trinity Academy helping needy with relief effort

By Mike Albanese  
The Chronicle-News

During the season of Lent, many people believe that it is filled with giving up things, not giving away things.

However this year, Holy Trinity Academy, in cooperation with Zion Lutheran Church, will be preparing gift baskets to be sent to the Zion World Relief and distributed to under-privileged students in Guatemala.

"(The students) are not so much worried about themselves, but helping the community," Holy Trinity Academy Principal Diana Nunez said. Every Friday, all 30 students at the academy have been bringing in personal and school supplies, such as pencils, combs and toothbrushes, which Zion Lutheran Church will pick up and distribute to the less fortunate. The items will be collected every Sunday morning, Wednesday evening and at Friday services and before Easter. The items will be packaged and mailed to Lutheran World Relief to be distributed to students.

Marie Hazen of Zion Lutheran said this is a wonderful event and seeing students giving, during a time associated with giving up is wonderful.

Nunez said this event will be going on through Easter Sunday and the school said all are welcome to donate what they'd like to help students in Guatemala.

Hazen added that Lutheran World Relief, which has been around since the 1940s, holds events each year in less fortunate countries.

On its website, lwr.org, the group's mission statement states, "Affirming God's love for all people, we work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice and human suffering."

While this year they are sending care packages to Guatemala this year, Hazen said in past years members of the church have been sent to different countries to perform surgeries or just offer help.



Mike Albanese/The Chronicle-News

Students at Holy Trinity Academy are helping the less fortunate this Easter as they will be preparing care packages filled with personal items and school supplies to send to Lutheran World Relief and distributed to students in Guatemala.

The academy was also busy Tuesday night with a pancake dinner fund raiser.

Between sizzling up sausage paddies and flipping flapjacks Tuesday night, the parents and students of Holy Trinity Academy managed to raise more than \$500.

Nunez said the annual pancake dinner, held at Fisher's Peak Soup Kitchen, was just a get together to kick off Lent, though it also doubles as a fund raiser for supplies and programs for students.

"The community does support us," Nunez said. "It was kind of a gathering to

start of the Lenten season."

Nunez said parents were really did most of the cleaning and cooking, and they did most of the hard work.

"The parents did most of the work," Nunez said. "They were the cooks and the clean up and the setting up the tables."

For more information about where to donate goods, contact Holy Trinity Academy at 719-846-4522.

Contact Mike Albanese at malbanese@trinidadchroniclenews.com or 719-846-3311 ex 207.

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Genius without education is like silver in the mine.

Benjamin Franklin, American author, inventor and physicist (1706-1790)

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