

# 33rd Street Productions takes on 'Flowers for Algernon'

**Ryan Kamphuis**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After staging a huge production of "Sweeny Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" last spring, 33rd Street Productions returned to the stage once again, with a production of Flowers of Algernon.

Opening this past Friday night in the Hermann Hall Auditorium, 33rd's production of "Flowers for Algernon" told the story of Charlie Gordon, a mentally handicapped adult who, due to a brain operation, experiences a miraculous increase in his intelligence.

33rd's production of "Flowers" represented just as much of a miracle as Charlie's transformation. Since the organization began work on its "Sweeny" follow-up in the fall, the production has been plagued by a myriad of problems; technical difficulties, the sudden loss

of actors, and issues with prop and makeup ob-tainment all almost halted production, leading some observers to think the show would never go on.

The very fact that "Flowers for Algernon" happened is a testament to the hard work and perseverance that 33rd Street Productions possesses, and the passion that all of the cast and crew had about the show.

Presented in two acts with a ten-minute intermission, "Flowers for Algernon" never felt like it dragged. The crew made sure that transitions went quickly and ensured that the pace of the play never slowed. The cast all seemed to know their lines well, and worked well together on stage.

I especially enjoyed the chemistry between Geoffrey Mitchell and Nathan Majernik, who played the scientific duo of Dr. Strauss and Professor Nemur, respectively. Their back and forth was delightful, and re-

ally made me feel like I was watching two researchers at work. Just as delightful was Allen White's, playing Burt Seldon, jaded interactions with Mitchell and Majernik, showing that the scientists who worked with Charlie might have actually cared about him as a human being, at least a little.

The best performance in the show, in my opinion, came from Shirley Nwangwa, who played Alice Kinnian. Nwangwa gave a performance that conveyed the conflicting emotions towards Charlie that Kinnian would have felt extremely well. Nwangwa also expertly managed the stage, and scenes with her in it seemed to express a passion unseen in other scenes.

It would be impossible to talk about "Flowers for Algernon" without talking about the main character, Charlie Gordon. Glen Blosser played Gordon with a sense of urgency that fit the character perfectly. While his por-

trayal of the complex emotions that Gordon would be experiencing could have used some work, the high quality of the rest of Blosser's performance vastly overshadowed this issue.

Did "Flowers for Algernon" have its issues? Yes. Could it have used a little more work? Yes. Does that make it a bad show? Absolutely not. I had a fantastic time watching "Flowers for Algernon", and really think that anyone who can should go and see it. It entertained me and made me think, which is exactly what the troupe was going for, as explained in Director Mitchell's letter to the audience.

I'd give this production four out of five stars, and everyone should be putting a performance of Flowers on their calendar. "Flowers for Algernon" will be performed again this coming Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in the Hermann Hall Auditorium, and doors will be opening at 7:00 p.m.

Go, you will not regret it.

## Second Presidential Lecture series sees packed lecture hall

**Utsav Gandhi**  
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The inaugural Presidential Lecture, hosted by IIT President John L. Anderson, was instituted last semester as an opportunity for students to hear from some of the nation's most eminent academic and political personalities on today's most challenging global issues. Dr. Irwin Stelzer, senior fellow and director of Hudson Institute's Economic Policy Studies Group, delivered the lecture on Friday, October 19, 2012. He spoke about using regulations to find cheaper, better market solutions in tackling environmental road-blocks.

Noted MIT academic and civil servant, John Deutch, former Secretary of Defense and Director of the CIA, delivered the second lecture, also based on the theme of environmental sustainability. John W. Rowe, chairman of the IIT Board of Trustees and chairman emeritus of Exelon Corporation, introduced the lecture entitled "Energy Outlook for North America and the World."

Dr. Deutch started off emphatically stating the scientific reality of anthropogenic global warming and said that his talk would focus on the role of natural gas to achieve environmental sustainability. He said that as an institute of technology, IIT has a special role

to play in the delivering of solutions.

Four years ago, when President Obama first started, the US had 60% oil dependence on foreign countries, and the \$8 price of natural gas was continually increasing. Over his four years, concern over global warming has increased. Expectations that the USA would institute policies to mitigate global warming have risen around the world. There is increased optimism in the power of nuclear power, wind, geothermal, and photovoltaic energy sources.

Now that President Obama has been sworn in a second time, where are we today? There is an enormous change in the energy outlook. There are apparent changes in production: we are now substantially independent in oil imports (under 20%). Price of natural gas is now \$3 for home heating and industry (making it more competitive), and has led to job production in states including Pennsylvania, Ohio, North Dakota, California, and Louisiana.

Internationally, our neighbors in Canada are exploiting their natural gas resources well. China, India, Latin America, Argentina and Russia are also increasingly looking at natural gas. Few large resource holders (Venezuela, Russia) could individually change the structure of the global oil market, leading to changes in our allies' situation. There is tremendous global disparity in the

price of natural gas, about \$10 in Europe, \$15 in Shanghai and Tokyo.

Our technical ability to liquefy gas will influence its price and availability, as well as the diversity of supply. However, this does not mean we are now supply independent. If the price of oil goes up somewhere in the Middle East (or likewise) there will be a response to the interruption. He said that Iran still supplies 3 million barrels of oil per day, but it is also clearly supporting terrorism and developing nuclear weapons, which is not in the best interests of the United States.

Concerns are frequently and legitimately brought up regarding hydraulic fracturing and its large-scale environmental impact. Are these gas sources near the water surface, and entering the water tables? He said that fracking poses no danger to water level if done safely and within governmental regulations. He urged the scientific community to look at the problem from the perspective of overall benefits to semi urban towns.

Unfortunately, the government is doing nothing. There is limited funding for fracking, and the current policies regarding it are questionable. They don't really deal with the priorities and market prices. Reducing carbon emissions, providing domestic jobs, focusing on renewable energy, the government is trying to tackle it all and not really making progress in any one field.

He said that nuclear energy is definitely good, but we currently don't have the instruments to guarantee that another Fukushima cannot happen. Advancements in battery technology, energy efficiency, and building sustainability are the big needs of the day. The government in the energy policy sector has 3 roles: supporting technology research and development, demonstrating technical capability for investors, and subsidizing deployment, by ensuring benefits outnumber costs and by instituting renewable portfolio standards and tax incentives.

Universities, on the other hand, have the all important task to ensure students get trained, educated and well prepared, before going out into the real world to look at its complexities. Engaging students with the thoughtful integration of economics, technology, and politics, as well as establishing more centers of material science and engineering to ignite curiosity and motivation to work on these problems is a huge need. Unconventional sources are only going to put us on a more stable platform to meeting our energy needs. The big challenge in today's energy crisis is to integrate technology as a solution at the beginning, not at the end.

The lecture was followed by a fantastic networking session where students could personally talk to Mr. Deutch and ask him any questions.

## Illinois Tech Robotics hosts youth outreach night

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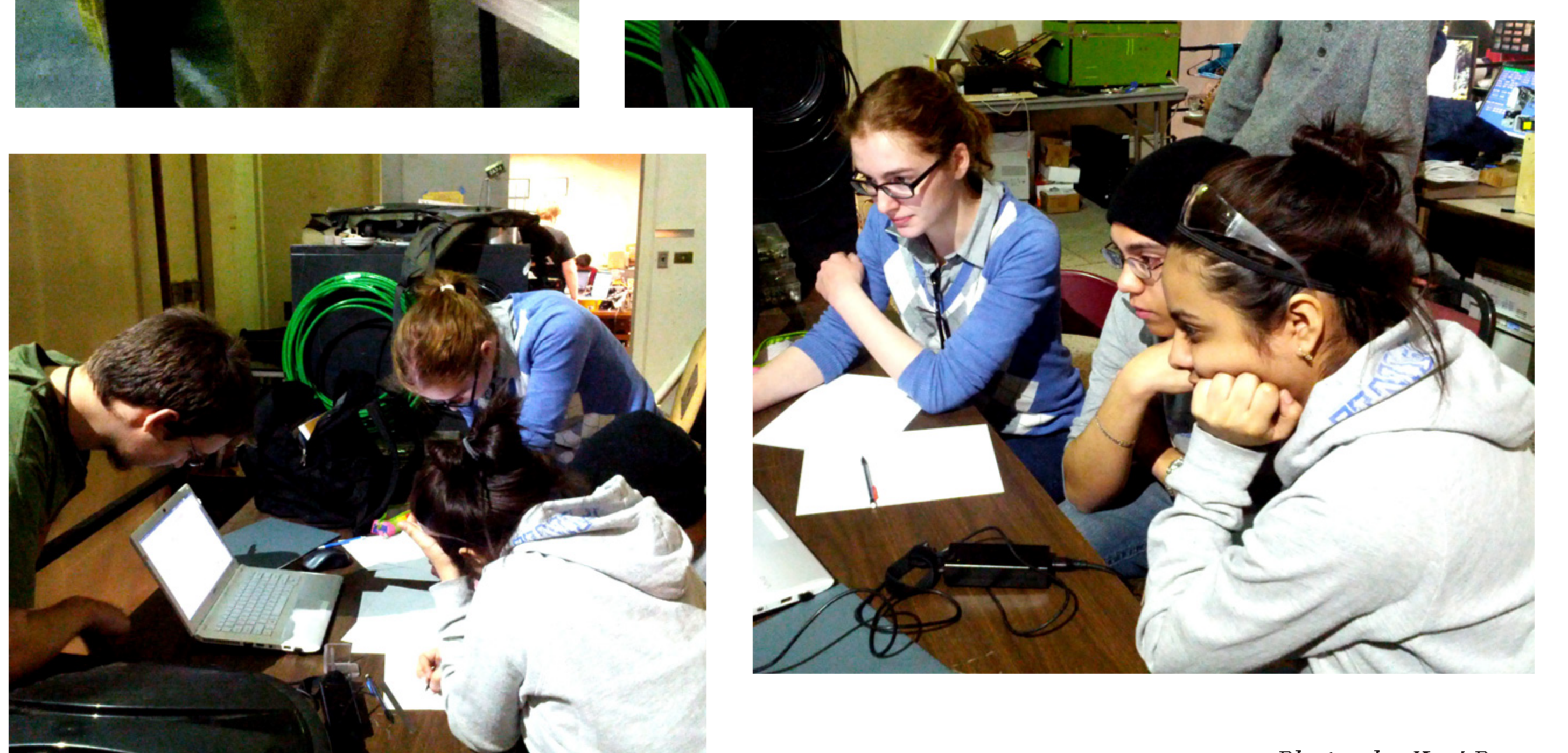
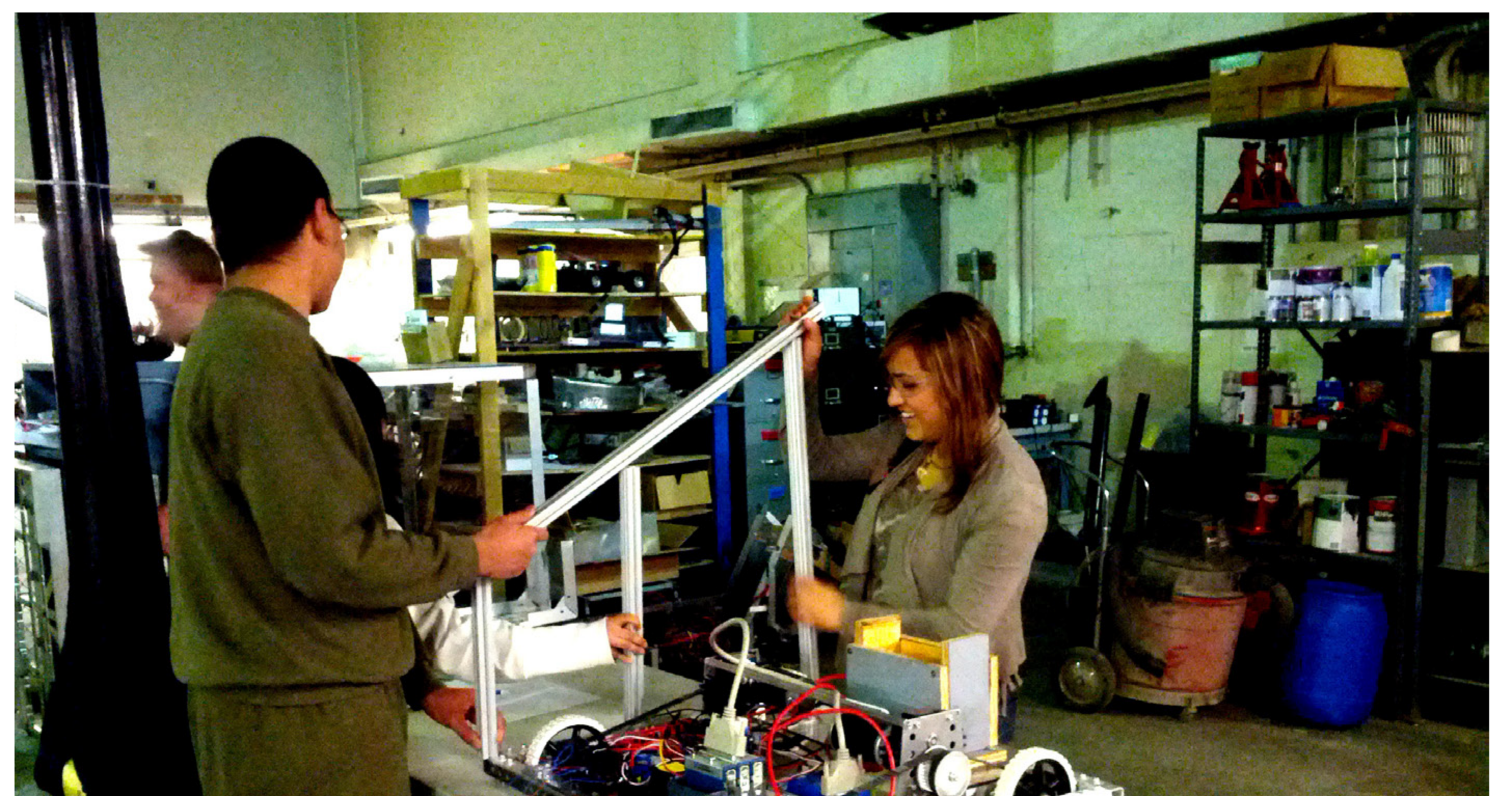
While Illinois Institute of Technology's robotics team is often known for taking home multiple titles in various competitions, they do a significant amount of philanthropic work supporting STEM education in the local community. Last Friday, Illinois Tech Robotics took a break from working on their own projects and invited local area teams into their lab for an FRC help night.

The FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) is yearly international high school robotics competition where students take on the challenge of building a robot weighing up to 120 pounds that can complete a task, which changes with each year. Competition details are released in early January and teams are given six weeks to construct a competitive robot. This year, in the 22nd year of FRC, teams are challenged to build a robot capable of throwing Frisbees into goals, in a game not unlike Frisbee golf.

With one week left in their build season, several local area teams were scrambling for help, which is where Illinois Tech Robotics (ITR) stepped in. IIT's robotics club opened their lab doors to teams in Illinois who were looking for any guidance. From programming assistance, to design ideas, to fabrication work, ITR was able to offer its members' expertise across all areas teams were in need of.

One team in attendance was having code difficulties, and was looking to implement a way to implement some complex math to calculate how far away their robot was from a goal and how fast and at what angle a Frisbee would have to be shot in order to reach it. With the help of some experienced ITR programmers, the team gained some valuable insight that lead to solving their problem. Another team, which is competing in FRC for the first time this year, was limited by their budget and meeting location, which did not allow them access to an adequate machine shop to make custom parts. Again, ITR was able to assist by giving access to the resources, time, and experienced assistance necessary to make the parts needed for their robot.

Overall, the event was a great success, and several high school students left IIT's campus feeling accomplished and confident to work out their robots' issues and finish up their build season strongly. "I feel this event was a huge success. We had multiple teams attend who all had a great time; our own members also had a fantastic time sharing their knowledge and our workspace with these students. Some students even had such a fantastic time that they are now going to apply to IIT as engineering students this coming fall," said Ryan Kamphuis, ITR's Vice President of Philanthropy, who organized the event, "We couldn't be happier with how it went, and ITR can't wait to do something like this again."



Photos by Kori Bowns