Livingston PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NJ Teen Builds International STEM Bridge:
LHS Student Designs Robotics Curriculum, Travels to Kenya to Launch Program

Livingston, NJ: A unique two-year collaboration led by students from Livingston High School (LHS) has culminated in the establishment of a new STEM Robotics Lab at the GRACE School in Kisii, Kenya, marking a significant achievement in global education partnership.

What began as a cultural exchange has grown into a high-impact global citizenship project, spearheaded by **LHS student Calvin Coakley**. Calvin raised over **$5,300** to purchase ten VEX IQ Robotics Kits and, crucially, designed a comprehensive **35-lesson robotics curriculum** tailored for the Kenyan students.

From Fundraising to Foreign Travel

The initiative reached a dramatic turning point when Calvin traveled to the GRACE School in Kisii to provide intensive, on-site professional development for the Kenyan STEM teachers. He equipped the local staff with the skills and confidence necessary to teach the new curriculum. Since his return, he has maintained weekly virtual meetings to ensure the program's sustained success.

"Watching our students collaborate across continents—sharing knowledge, culture, and compassion—has been incredible," said Robert Rolling, K-12 Supervisor of Technology, Business, and Media. "They're not just building a STEM lab; they're building a future rooted in global connection and showing the true power of student-led innovation."

A Partnership Built on Literacy and Culture

This international bridge was initially forged by the LHS DECA club and Robotics Team. Under the guidance of teacher Dan Quackenbush, the collaboration began with a vibrant summer reading and cultural exchange. These sessions run twice weekly from June through August, connecting students through interactive online activities like trivia games, collaborative reading, and cultural showcases.

Beyond academics, the exchange focuses on mutual cultural learning: Livingston students teach Spanish or French, while their Kenyan peers introduce them to Swahili, traditional songs, and dances. This deepens mutual understanding and transforms the partnership into more than academic tutoring—it builds genuine friendships.

This entire global initiative has been made possible through the support of TEEEM (The Empathy, Equality, Entrepreneurship Mission), a non-profit dedicated to empowering the next generation of changemakers by partnering with schools in underserved communities worldwide.

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