



## **Schools, Businesses Team Up for Competition**

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Danielson, CT—Cinch and tote bags with 90% recycled content helped earn Killingly High School top honors May 16<sup>th</sup> at the Quinebaug Valley Plastics Institute and Quinebaug Valley Community College Plastics Expo in Danielson.

The nine-member team paired with Web Industries, Inc. – a Dayville, Conn. flexible material contract manufacturer and converter – to fashion what it called “Plast-X Bags” during the six-month-long competition.

Six high school teams each were partnered with a plastics company. They each had a \$1,500 budget and were required to design a product, pick the materials, and then develop manufacturing plans, as well as sales and marketing materials. The event concluded with each team making a 15-minute presentation, including a product commercial.

“You could see the work, the effort and team dedication in every group. It was really difficult to pick a winner,” said Marjorie Weiner, senior outreach educator with the Leominster, Mass.-based National Plastics Center, and one of three judges. Killingly, also located in Danielson, used a polypropylene material that contained 90 percent recycled content and was fire-retardant and deodorized. The school farmed out the actual material making and then had to find people to sew up the bags.

Devonte Banks, a sophomore who plans to become an entrepreneur, was voted Killingly’s Most Valuable Player by his teammates.

“I thought it would be just another competition, but what we learned to do covers all of business,” he said, noting that the team stayed after school every Monday to work on the project.

Members of the team were Michelle White, Gienna Rittenhouse, Tony Fradette, Nick Sheldon, Kailyn Morrison, Kellie Kilpatrick, James Walker IV, and Darius and Devonte Banks. Todd Zagurski was the teaching adviser, while Jim Evans, Rob Guillette and Benjamin Tremblay were the Web Industries advisers.

“There was teamwork. They wouldn’t normally be working together, but they all wanted the same thing – that’s what you have to do in real life. It was a good lesson,” Tremblay said.

The competition was keen, as the other schools also had interesting applications.

Plainfield High School worked with Westminster Tool Co. Inc., a Plainfield toolmaker, and came up with “Dr. Top,” a combination base, tap, and cap seal to help maintain the carbonation in soda. It earned the People’s Choice Prize, which was determined by a vote of all attendees.

[www.webindustries.com](http://www.webindustries.com)

Also, Woodstock Academy of Woodstock, Conn., worked with Putnam Precision Molding, Inc. of Putnam to come up with “Slippery Gripz,” thermoplastic elastomers strips that attach to shoes.

H. H. Ellis Technical High School of Danielson joined Colt’s Plastic Co. Inc. of Dayville and designed a unique, horseshoe-shaped kickstop made of ABS.

Tourtellotte Memorial High School of North Grosvenordale, Conn. worked with Gentex Optics Inc. of Dudley, Mass. and came up with a “Second Sight Infrasizer,” a helmet with infrared camera and vision monitor.

Putnam High School worked with Foster Corp., also of Putnam, Conn., and came up with “Let’s Glow” photo-luminescent tape with adhesive and a paper backing.

The Quinebaug Valley Plastics Institute, according to President Jeanne Zesut, consists of 47 companies that collaborate with the local community college and area guidance counselors. The object is to teach students about the industry and to train future employees.