

Bricks for the Blind and FIRST® LEGO® League Partner Making the 2024-2025 SUBMERGEDSM Challenge Most Inclusive in History

Using Bricks for the Blind's Text-Based Building Instructions, Students Who Are Blind Can Now Participate in FIRST LEGO League's Annual Challenge

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, August 6, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Bricks for the Blind \(BFTB\)](#) is thrilled to announce that for the first time, blind and visually impaired students can participate fully in FIRST® LEGO® League's annual challenge. This groundbreaking initiative marks a significant step toward inclusivity and accessibility in STEM education.



Until this year's [SUBMERGEDSM challenge](#), the instructions for building the LEGO® sets in the FIRST LEGO League challenge were only presented through pictures and limited text, making them inaccessible to visually impaired students. BFTB has converted pictorial instructions into written instructions, called Text-Based Building Instructions (TBI), so visually impaired students can access the instructions using assistive technologies like screen readers.

Bricks for the Blind (BFTB) is a non-profit organization that brings the joy of building LEGO sets to blind people. More than 100 Text-Based Building Instructions are available at www.bricksfortheblind.org. All TBIs are free to download and use.

Matthew Shifrin, founder of BFTB, emphasized the importance of this development, stating, "Blind children have the same passion and curiosity as their sighted peers. Now that they can participate in the FIRST LEGO League challenge, they can fully engage with STEM activities and contribute their unique perspectives to solving real-world problems. This is a monumental step forward in making STEM accessible to everyone."

Dr. Janell N. Catlin, Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at FIRST, praised BFTB's

efforts, saying, "We are incredibly grateful to Matthew Shifrin and Bricks for the Blind for their dedication to inclusivity. Their work is instrumental in expanding the reach of FIRST LEGO League to include students who are blind, allowing them to experience the joy and educational benefits of FIRST. This collaboration exemplifies our commitment to making STEM education accessible to all."

About Bricks for the Blind

Bricks for the Blind (BFTB) is a non-profit organization that brings the joy of building LEGO sets to blind people. By following BFTB's free Text-based Building Instructions, people with visual impairments can build LEGO sets and enjoy hours of relaxation, independence, and empowerment.

About FIRST

FIRST® is a robotics community that prepares young people for the future. FIRST provides life-changing, team-based PreK-12 robotics programs that give young people the skills, confidence, and resilience to build a better world. Boosted by a global support system of volunteers, educators, donors, and sponsors, teams operate under a signature set of FIRST Core Values to conduct research, fundraise, design, build, and showcase their achievements during annual challenges.

An international not-for-profit organization founded by accomplished inventor Dean Kamen in 1989, FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) has a proven impact on STEM learning, interest, and skill-building well beyond high school. Participants and alumni of FIRST programs gain access to education and career discovery opportunities, connections to exclusive scholarships and employers, and a place in the FIRST community for life. Learn more at firstinspires.org.

Sheila Bryson

Bricks for the Blind

sheila@bricksfortheblind.org

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