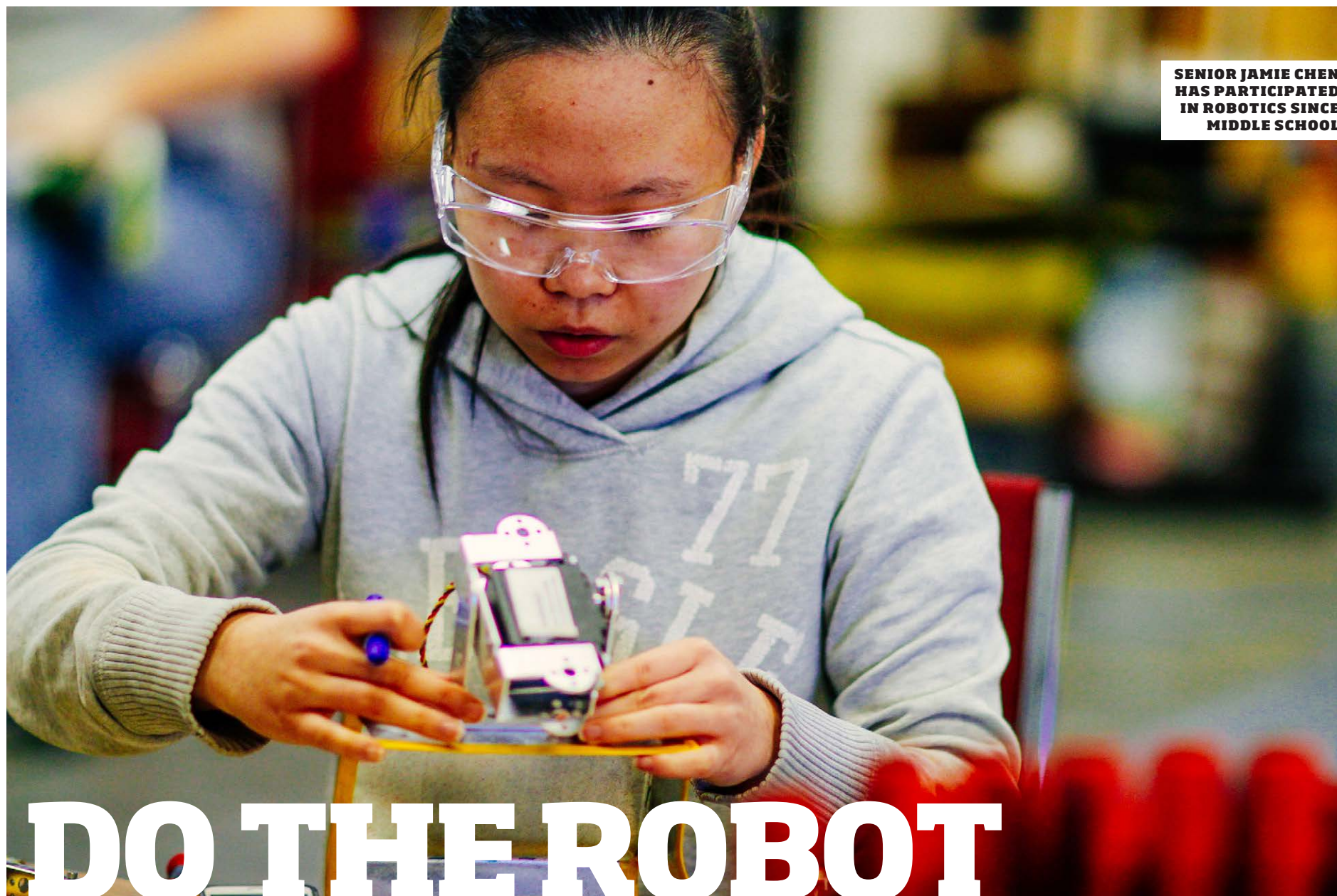


**SENIOR JAMIE CHEN
HAS PARTICIPATED
IN ROBOTICS SINCE
MIDDLE SCHOOL**



DO THE ROBOT

Students at Junction City High School gain tech skills with robotics BY MOHAMMED ALKHADHER

While technology continues to inch its way further into our everyday lives, a group of students at Junction City High School (JCHS) are embracing that trend by building robots. Yes, robots — not the kind that will take over the world, although they might attack your interest.

Stacey Johnson, a science teacher at JCHS, meets with students twice a week after school in a building near the school's soccer fields. Johnson, who had no experience with robotics prior to this endeavor, says students in robotics programs often do better in college because of the experience they get in the club.

"It's not necessarily about winning," she says. "It's about your attitude and accountability, and it's about being respectful."

Johnson adds, "The true spirit of this competition is to learn design and engineering. They understand deadlines and testing, and when they get to the university setting, it won't be new to them."

The JCHS robotics club is divided into two teams of eight. Each team consists of programmers, engineers, a secretary to keep track of the funds and a captain. Johnson says her role is mostly supervisory. The students manage their own budget, plans and execution.

They've converted a classroom into a robotics lab, using foam mats for the floor of their field and a metal obstacle to simulate the challenges they'll attempt to overcome in tournament, which change every year.

"It's fun," says freshman engineer Quinn Barrett. "You need to be able to rely on the other members of your team.

We have to depend on the programmers to work out all the bugs and the programmers have to rely on you to get the robot working."

Barrett says he's always enjoyed building things and hopes to study astro-engineering or astronomy after graduating.

Senior and team captain Jessica Fang says this is

On Feb. 8, the students prepared for the state qualifiers, also known as the "Super-Qualifiers" to the Oregon Robotics Tournament and Outreach community.

Unfortunately, due to technical issues incurred during the bus ride, JCHS's two teams weren't able to recover fast enough in Hillsboro and did not earn a seed in the state competition.

"We had an issue where the vibration of the bus rattled our linear slide off its track," Johnson says. "We just didn't have the time to fix it."

While it may be difficult to imagine what a "linear slide" looks like, or what "track" it may have fallen off of, it only goes to show how technical this sport is.

Is robotics a sport? A sport is defined as an activity involving physical exertion and skill in which an individual or team competes against another or others for entertainment.

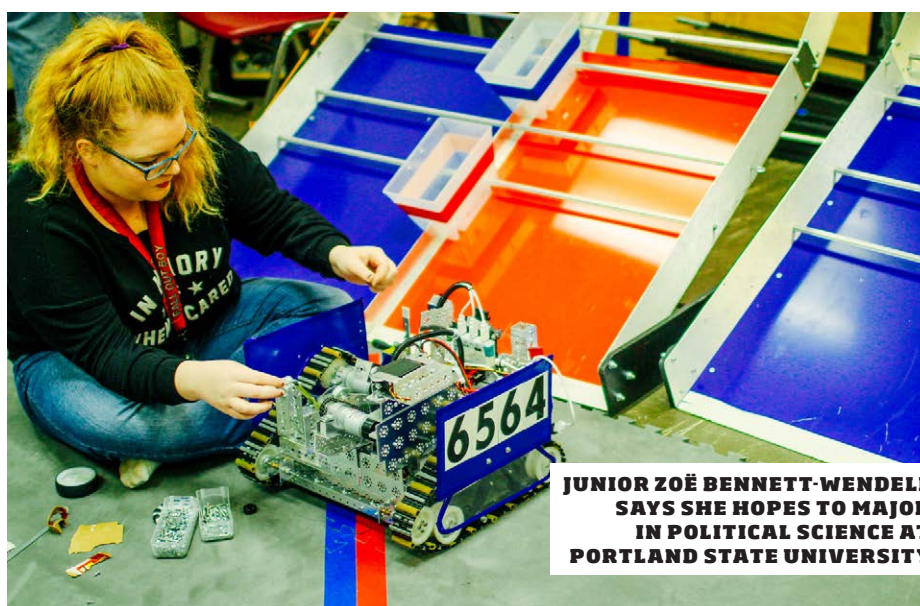
"We compete, we get points, we play with and against other teams," says Ryan Sherman, junior at JCHS and team captain.

While the team may not be competing in the next state tournament, Johnson says, they'll be very busy in the off-season.

"We will clean up and reflect this week," Johnson says. "Then we take a few weeks off before spring season."

This spring, the team will design and build an ultimate Frisbee launcher for two cerebral palsy Life Skills students at JCHS. Life Skills is a Lane School District program that serves students with varying disabilities from kindergarten to the age of 21.

"The kids are getting more than winning," Johnson says. "They're learning life lessons." ■



**JUNIOR ZOË BENNETT-WENDELL
SAYS SHE HOPES TO MAJOR
IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AT
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILL TAYLOR

her third year with the robotics program at JCHS. She's passionate about engineering but says there aren't enough women in the field.

"There's no influence to show women or empower women that they, too, can do it," Fang says. "It creates different opportunities which I've never seen before, when you see engineering with other girls your age working with you."