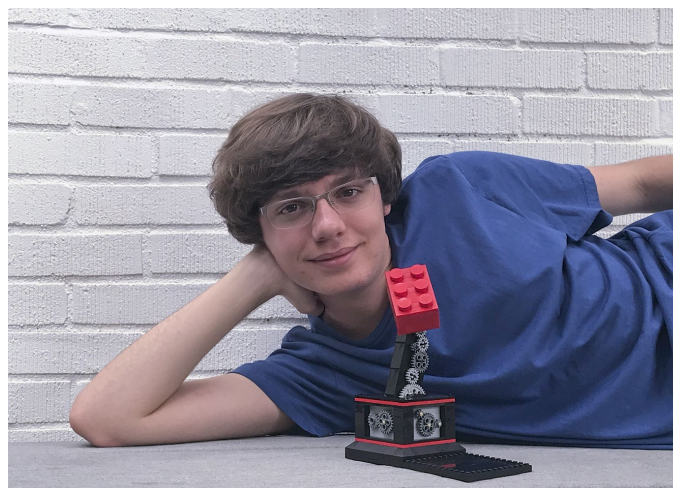


Meet the Winner of the 2018 LEGO® Ideas Trophy Design Contest

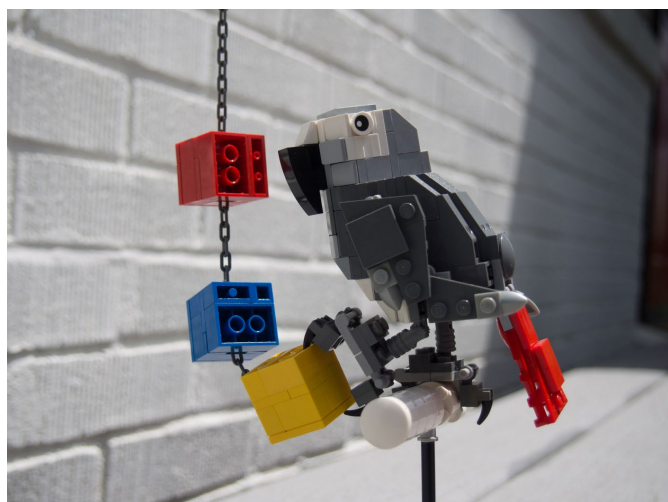
By Sanjay Seshan and Arvind Seshan

EV3Lessons.com and FLLTutorials.com



Quinten, nasa105

Quinten, also known as Nasa105, is a teenage LEGO® designer from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He started building with LEGO® bricks when he was four or five years old. He loves building with LEGO®, but also enjoys hanging out with friends, the comics page, old TV sitcoms, trying new foods, repeating funny movie lines with his brother, and the sport of trapshooting.



Earl, the African Gray Parrot



Yello Hot Rod

Quinten has entered LEGO® contests for years. Many times, he came close to winning. For example, his African Gray Parrot model, Earl, was mentioned on the LEGO® Creator blog and hangs in the Pittsburgh Aviary. His Yello Hot Rod was used on the LEGO® Creator website. However, in the spring of 2018, Quinten was named the winner of the LEGO® Ideas Trophy Design Contest with his entry called The 2X3. On August 1st, we invited Quinten to come to a FIRST LEGO® League kickoff event so he could see the contest that he had designed the trophy for.

How did you come up with your trophy design?



Meeting Quinten at the FIRST LEGO® League kickoff

A few months before the contest I saw some cool trophies that some other LEGO® fans had made, and I thought to myself “Hey, it would be cool to make a trophy sometime. I keep entering contests and not quite winning, but I’ve put in loads of work and my skills are getting better, maybe I should build a trophy for myself to remind myself to keep trying, keep going, and keep building.” So, I had some ideas bouncing around in my head for a couple months. Then the LEGO® Ideas contest came along! It was a great opportunity for me to get the idea out of my head. Getting ideas out of your mind and building for real frees up room for a lot of new ideas. Oh, and I first heard about the contest in the last 10 days, so I had to hurry!

What does your trophy represent and how did the various elements in your design achieve this goal?

To me this trophy tells me to keep trying. I entered a lot of LEGO.com contests and lost every single one, but I didn't let that stop me. If you don't win a contest, that doesn't mean your building is bad, it just means you have to keep trying and persevere onward. I was building The 2x3 for myself, to tell myself to just keep building. Win or not, The 2x3 was going to be there to tell me to always keep trying. I hope The 2x3 will now go on to represent that for participants in FIRST LEGO® League.

The trophy also represents creativity (the red color) and engineering (the grey gears). I love LEGO® kinetic sculptures and models that have functions and elegance combined together, and I really wanted to capture the spirit of those designs in my trophy. I believe there is an art and beauty in technology and I wanted the trophy to show that in a sculptural way. I wanted it to feel good in my hands, to have a solid feel. And I wanted the trophy to be something iconic to look at even years from now; what's more iconic than a classic LEGO® brick?

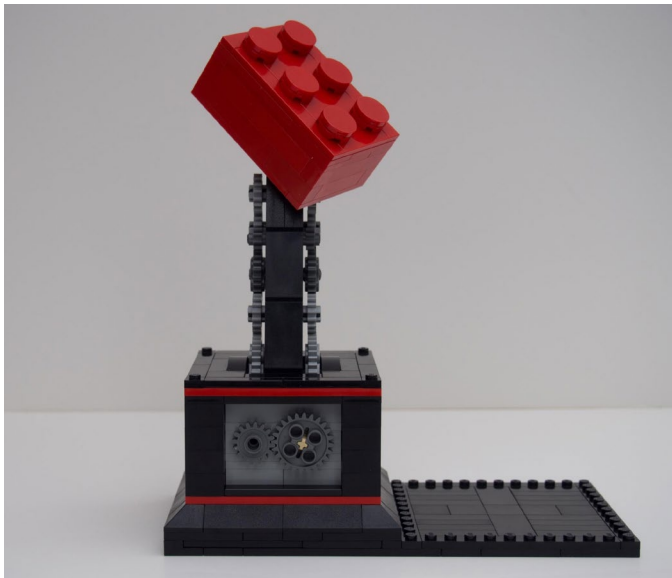


The 2x3 Front View

Did you go through a lot of designs?

For this contest, I had a pretty good idea of what I wanted to enter, but there have been other contests where I've had almost a dozen ideas. The idea and the design of The 2x3 formed quickly, but it didn't come from nowhere. I had years of build-up and practice with LEGO® before the contest, so when the time came, I was ready.

There were only 10 days left for me to build my trophy and enter, so I didn't have much time to go through many iterations. At the beginning I did some testing in LEGO® Digital Designer to get through first iterations for the base that would have taken longer in physical building. I knew I wanted this to be a physical build so LDD was a great tool to speed that process up. Then I didn't waste time digging for LEGO® bricks (still working on sorting my collection!).



The 2x3 Side View

What was the most challenging part of creating your trophy?

I had a general idea for the shape of the trophy from the base all the way to the brick, but I couldn't quite visualize it when it came to the gears. I had to play around with the gears a bit and test different combinations to see what looked better. It took me a while to mesh the gears on the column while still maintaining the organic climbing effect, but in the end, it was worth it. I also realized early on that the gear panels would require some fiddling similar to the column, so when I was building the base I made each panel modular. This really saved time in the design process.

LEGO® Worlds was pivotal in the final design of my trophy. There's no custom SNOT building or Technic available in LEGO® Worlds, only straight up-and-down building with LEGO® System bricks. This gave me the opportunity to practice my non-SNOT building skills and really see the power in regular LEGO® bricks again. Before, I sometimes used

SNOT building as a crutch rather than a design element, but now I can better distinguish the correct times to use it. Some people have complained about the limitations of LEGO® Worlds, but those limitations made me more resourceful. If you really want to improve your regular LEGO® System building, LEGO® Worlds is a great tool for that.

What other LEGO® creations are you especially proud of?

Whether it's a model I build for a contest, a model I build with friends and family, or a model that I build by myself, I learn something new from it. Each new technique I learn goes on to improve the next model, so they're all very special to me because of the different things I learned from each one. Learning new things from previous designs enables us to create better things in the future. They are all good friends, it's impossible to determine which friend is most special.

Here's one model that specifically influenced my trophy. This is Holly Jolly Conifers, an entire Christmas Tree Farm built in LEGO® Worlds. I absolutely LOVE Christmas, so last year I wanted to make something in LEGO® Worlds that really captured the Christmas spirit. Plus, there was a LEGO® Worlds Winter Wonderland contest going on LEGO®.com, so I figured I'd give it a shot! Holly Jolly Conifers did not win the contest though, and that was a bit discouraging. It felt like just another failed attempt. However, that discouragement went on to fuel The 2x3 in a great way. I realized that I still learned much about lighting and new design techniques while building Holly Jolly Conifers, and while it's still nice to win every now and then, learning new things to improve the next model is most important.



Holly Jolly Conifers

Do you have recommendations for others who want to enter LEGO® design contests?

Feedback is important in any model you make. It's best to find people who you trust to give you good constructive criticism, they can help you notice a problem you may not have noticed otherwise. I always like to ask my family for feedback. You need feedback people that know you and how you design because then they will know when to tell you to push harder, try one more time, or even pull back a little. My feedback people are really important to my builds.

What happens after you win a LEGO® IDEAS contest?

I was surprised at how much there is to do after winning; emails, meetings, design discussion, some physical building, and interviews like this one, but it's also a really amazing experience meeting people from all over the LEGO® community. It's so cool seeing first-hand how LEGO® works and designs their models, and I'm impressed by how much they care about the quality of every build. Although, I think the best part is getting to work with a LEGO® designer. It's like walking into Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory!

I want to say thank you to LEGO® Ideas, LEGO® Education, the FLL, and LEGO® in general for being so kind and welcoming. I'd also like to say thank you to everyone in the TT Games Development Team for creating LEGO® Worlds, The 2x3 would not have been the same without it. And I want to give a big thank you to the Seshan Brothers for offering me this great interview!

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