Honorable Mention: Shelby Manlove

Shields Elementary School
Teacher: Ms. Gail Drummond

I am very blessed to live in Lewes, Delaware within minutes from the Rehoboth Bay. My family and I spend nearly every season along the shoreline. We love to seine the bay on class trips and closely investigate oysters. We also enjoy crabbing several times throughout the summer. My interest in shellfish makes me think it would be amazing if we were able to predict where these shellfish live and how abundant they are each year. University of Delaware has created the perfect robot to help with this discovery.

The Remotely Operated Vehicle is the ideal robot to tackle the shellfish investigation. This robot is able to take photographs, videos and evaluate water clarity and temperature in both shallow and deep water. The Remotely Operated Vehicle is especially clever because it is driven by a remote control and can easily move around under water surfaces. This vehicle is also tethered by a cable that is from the boat or dock.

Discoveries made by the Remotely Operated Vehicle would be helpful to the Eastern Shore. Crabbing has always been a successful industry in our area dating several hundred years. In the recent years, water pollution has led to declining numbers of crabs and other shellfish. The shallow water robot could accurately map and estimate current shellfish populations in the bay. This could help scientists compare year to year populations so that the watermen can keep crabbing in the future.

Detecting information about local oyster populations would be even more important. Oysters are a filter to the bay and help keep the water clean from pollution. The more oysters that live in the bay, the cleaner the water will be. The Remotely Operated Vehicle can measure water clarity and it also has a claw to grab oyster samples. This would be a great way to see how healthy our bay is throughout the year.

The University of Delaware has developed some amazing robots. The Remotely Operated Vehicle is very important to our local bays as it can discover much more about our special shellfish. I want my family to enjoy crabbing, discovering oysters and appreciate the beauty of the Rehoboth Bay for generations to come.