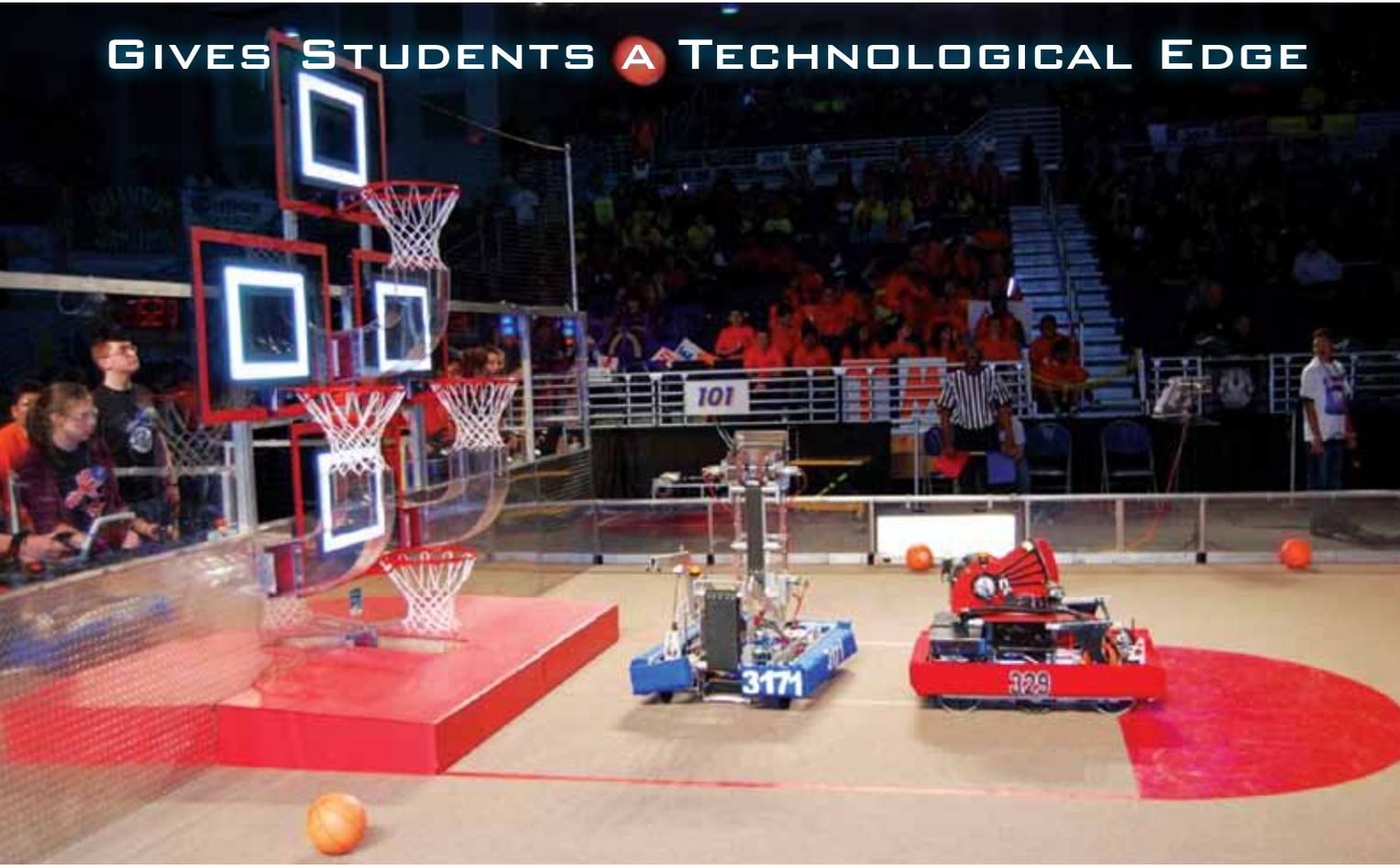


# SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS OF LONG ISLAND, INC (SBPLI)

## GIVES STUDENTS A TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE



It's 9:30 am...the first Saturday in January and all over the country tens of thousands of high school students are anxiously awaiting the reveal of the new FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition's "Game of the Year" that has been kept a big secret up until now. On Long Island, over 2000 eyes are fixated on the huge screens in the auditorium of the Jacob Javits Center at Stony Brook University. The excitement is building...the countdown begins. The LI teams (over 40 of them) are about to see just what will take up the bulk of their lives (other than school work) over the next six weeks. Each year at this "kick-off" event, the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC)'s Long Island Regional, sponsored and managed by School-Business Partnerships of Long Island, Inc. (SBPLI) officially begins as the students learn about the game and each team receives its "kit of parts."

Indeed, over these next six weeks,(and not a day longer) they will immerse themselves into a world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (the new "buzz term" referred to as S.T.E.M.) that - to which these students have attested- will transform their lives! With the guidance of industry mentors, they will design, build and program a 130-pound robot to compete in a sports play-off atmosphere at Hofstra University's David S. Mack Sports and Exhibition Complex. At this Regional event, the music reverberates, the teams and spectators cheer, the mascots dance, and the teams compete like crazy in an environment that promotes "gracious professionalism" and "coopertition", terms and behaviors unique to the FIRST Robotics programs.

Make no mistake....this is not a typical sporting event. It is so much more! This is where the magic happens! Fifty teams from Long Island, the metropolitan New

York area and other parts of the United States take part in the annual Long Island Regional FRC, a two-day event highlighting the students' teamwork and problem-solving skills. Two alliances of three teams challenge one another in an attempt to score as many points as possible. They not only develop an interest in science, technology, engineering and math but they also learn about teamwork, meeting deadlines, creating something that functions and competes, with very few instructions and MUST rely on theories, physics, logic and imagination!

These teams compete for some of the most prestigious awards, including the Chairman's Award, the highest award bestowed on any team. A few of these teams will also be invited to participate in the FIRST World Championships, in recent years, held in St. Louis. They not only get to represent their schools, but Long Island as well.

SBPLI was founded in 1984 by Fred Breithut with the goal of developing partnerships between local high schools and businesses that would provide students with practical experience and curriculum development, while helping the business community develop its future workforce.

The mission of SBPLI is fourfold: to partner with businesses to influence school curricula to provide future critical workforce skills; to create science and technology career development opportunities for high school and college students to participate in Long Island-based business-student



programs; to foster job opportunities on Long Island for students who have completed their education; and to create engaging fundraising initiatives for program advancement.

Since its inception, over 100 partnerships have been formed. More than 30,000 students have been directly influenced by internships, jobs and other close relationships with participating companies on Long Island. These students have gone on to study computer science, engineering and mathematics at some of the more prestigious universities. Through their FIRST Robotics experiences, they receive huge opportunities for college scholarships. Each year approximately \$15 million in scholarship money is made available to FIRST students.





Further, many local engineering and technology companies have offered internships to these students in order to give them the skills and knowledge they need when they enter the workforce upon graduation. With a growing demand for engineers and computer programmers here on Long Island and in this country, SBPLI is looking to meet that demand through the robotics programs.

In 1999, SBPLI brought the FIRST robotics program to Long Island, where 8 high school teams participated. Since then, the FIRST robotics program has grown to 50 teams, with over 2,000 students participating in FIRST Robotics and FIRST LEGO League programs on Long Island each year.

The FIRST LEGO League (FLL) and the Junior FIRST LEGO League (Jr. FLL) introduces children as young as six years old to the wonderful world of robotics. FLL has expanded with nearly



100 teams participating. In 2011, SBPLI held its first-ever FLL Qualifying Tournament to accommodate the growing number of schools and clubs taking part in the program. From there, 48 teams were chosen to participate in the FLL Championship at Longwood High School.

Frank Otto, President of LIFT (Long Island Forum for Technology) and President of Applied Science Foundation for Homeland Security, refers to SBPLI's Robotics programs as the "best kept secret on Long Island."

financial support of corporate sponsors such as FESTO Corporation, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Northrop-Grumman, BAE Systems, Estée Lauder Inc, and Schenck Trebel Corp. as well university partners including Hofstra University, SUNY Stony Brook, Farmingdale State College and Dowling College to sustain the program. To further augment these efforts, SBPLI undertakes a variety of fundraising initiatives.

To make a donation or for more information about SBPLI, please visit [www.sbpli.org](http://www.sbpli.org).

Each year, it costs SBPLI approximately \$250,000 to offer these robotics programs. To this end, SBPLI must rely on the

