



Education Today

Robots Have Students Putting Science First

(NAPSA)—There's hopeful news for those concerned that U.S. students lag behind when it comes to science and math.

An innovative charity called FIRST seems to have found a way to stimulate kids' interest in science and show them a potential career path. It does this by getting young people interested in robotics.

FIRST stands for "For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology," whose mission is to inspire students to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in mentor-based programs that build science, engineering and technology skills, inspire innovation and foster well-rounded life capabilities including self-confidence, communication and leadership.

Through fast-paced, high-energy, "March Madness"-style robotics competitions, FIRST immerses K-12 students in robotics education through competitions to design, build and program robots using engineering principles and a sports model of competition and teamwork.

The charity is also garnering significant corporate support. As the leading corporate advocate for after-school programs, JCPenney is committing its support of FIRST by sponsoring 60 high school teams nationwide as they compete in FIRST Robotics Competition regional events this spring.

JCPenney's sponsorship of 60 FRC teams across the country marks the beginning of the company's goal to bring FIRST to over 1,100 JCPenney communities



By involving students in competition to design and build robots, an innovative program is getting more kids interested in science.

within the next few years and encourage participation by "rookie" teams as well as minority and female students.

National support is increasing as organizations such as NASA, MIT and Lockheed Martin want to ensure America's pipeline of science and technology leaders.

"FIRST is about giving kids the opportunity to build skill sets to one day become a scientist, engineer or inventor," said Dean Kamen, FIRST founder. "Ten years from today, one of these students is going to be out in the world having done something extraordinary for a major, global problem."

To learn more about starting a FIRST team in a local community, visit www.usfirst.org.