



innovative learning grants



For the third consecutive year, Hatboro-Horsham High School hosted students from 40 schools at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Robotics Competition.

On Saturday, March 1, 2014, the competition was fierce in the Hatboro-Horsham High School gymnasium which was filled with 40 teams from area high schools, yet there were no basketballs, pucks, hockey sticks or nets. Rather, hundreds of students were gathered to compete in the Mid-Atlantic Regional Robotics Competition hosted by Hatboro-Horsham's [Team 708 Hardwired Fusion](#). Since 2008, the Hatboro-Horsham Educational Foundation (HHEF) has proudly provided funding for the Hatboro-Horsham High School Robotics Program.

"Our event is highly regarded as one of the most competitive in the country," explained Eric Zygmont, Hardwired Fusion's Chief Advisor and District Technology Assistant. "The teams enjoy coming to Hatboro-Horsham because of our facility and the ease of access to the school. Hatboro-Horsham School District is as gracious a host as possible, and the administration is ultra-supportive."



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Currently there are 42 students participating in the High School Robotics team, which is part of the national **FIRST** (For Inspiration & Recognition of Science & Technology) program. Robotics helps students develop quantifiable skills not only to become tomorrow's technology innovators, but also to help foster their ability to compete in the marketplace by being well-rounded individuals.

"Students also have the opportunity to network inside and outside our community and develop soft communication and presentation skills," added Zygmont. "The robot is a byproduct of the student's knowledge, innovation, and commitment to the program."

"This year's competition – Aerial Assist – was more challenging strategically, while other years might be more challenging technologically," Zygmont clarified. FIRST cycles the type of challenge every four years so that students have opportunities to develop a variety of skills.

"Hatboro-Horsham students have received numerous benefits from the robotics program and this is due to the dedication of Eric Zygmont," stated Nancy DeLucia, Executive Director of the HHEF. "Perhaps the largest of these is the ability for students to work with mentors from industry in a collaborative process with defined goals, risks and rewards. We are so proud to help fund this program through the HHEF. Additionally, students work with technologies that are not available or practical in the traditional classroom."

"I love working with the students, and watching them develop skills over four years. The unique thing about our program is that all aspects directly correlate to the curriculum that students are learning," Zygmont described.

[Click here for more photos.](#)