



Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation Inc.



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CONTACT: Sherrie Emoto, board@mbhsmagnet.org

Montgomery Blair High School Robotics Team Places at Robotics Contest

Silver Spring, MD—The Montgomery Blair High School robotics team earned 7th place at the 2011 Washington DC Regional Foundation for Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) Robotics Competition, which was held March 24-26 at the DC Convention center. Sixty-three teams from the Eastern United States participated in this annual competition that is designed to inspire young people's interest and participation in science and technology, as well as build self-confidence, leadership, and life skills. More than 50 Blair students were involved, mostly from the Montgomery Blair High School Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program.

In January, participating robotics teams were first informed about the nature of this year's competition, which was to construct a robot to play a game called Logomotion, and given six weeks to build their robot. At the contest, matches lasted two minutes 15 seconds each and were played by two alliances of three robots each, for a total of six robots on the playing field at a time. The goal during the first 15 seconds was for robots to move autonomously in order to hang a yellow tube on a peg at the end of the playing field. During the next stage, student drivers operated the robots with the goal of hanging as many red, white, and blue tubes on the pegs as possible during the remainder of the time period. Extra points were awarded if these tubes were hung in proper order to create the FIRST Robotics logo. During the final ten seconds of each match, robots deployed a minibot to climb a pole and hit a sensor at its top, which resulted in extra points if performed successfully. During ten such qualifying matches, the Blair team earned a spot among the top eight teams and the right to participate in the elimination rounds, which resulted in its 7th place victory. The team is coached by Blair magnet teacher Mr. Erik Lodol and will compete next at the regional competition to be held in Raleigh, North Carolina on April 7-9.

Blair robotics team vice president Eric Huang of Gaithersburg excitedly comments about the competition, "It was great seeing all of our team's hard work pay off as we placed in the top 7 out of 63 teams. We haven't done this well in the DC regional for a while. We'll

Address:

MBHS Magnet
Foundation Inc.
P.O. Box 5329
Takoma Park,
MD 20913o

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definitely show our robot's true potential at the NC regional.” Team lead programmer David Kaufman of Chevy Chase agrees, “Robotics allows us to put to use skills in engineering, computer programming, physics, and math that we learn in our magnet classes. We also learn how to work as a team and stick to a schedule. The outcome is a working robot and a whole lot of fun. I am really grateful to have this opportunity and would like to thank the magnet program and my teachers for teaching me the skills I need to work on the robotics team.” Blair student Marcus Clark of Silver Spring, who drove the robot during the competition adds, “The contest/competition is a great learning experience. It is a way to show off your problem solving skills as you are faced with a different game/problem every year. It is also fun, engaging, and exciting as you meet new people, and see how robotics is changing the world.”



The Montgomery Blair High School 2010-2011 Robotics Team at the Washington DC Regional FIRST Robotics Competition.



The Blair robot scoring under the direction of Robotics driving team, Eric Huang, Matt Bernstein, and Marcus Clark. (Photos courtesy of Blair team mentor, Dr. Timothy Judkins.)

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About The Montgomery Blair High School Magnet Foundation

This organization was founded by a group of concerned students, teachers, administrators, parents, and alumni in 2008. Its purpose is to promote science, mathematics, and computer science education by supporting the Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in its efforts to develop resources and refine practices needed to provide a rigorous and enriched education for students, staff, and the community at large. The Foundation is incorporated in the state of Maryland and is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

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