

## **Equal Footing Foundation Sponsors Six Computer Clubhouse Teams in National Youth Robotics Competition**

### ***Greater D.C. Regional Botball Robotics Tournament Set to Take Place April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Northern Virginia Community College***

**Herndon, VA – April 14, 2009** – The Equal Footing Foundation (EFF), the charitable arm of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC) with programs for the development and education of underserved youth in the area, today announced, that for the fourth year in a row, it is sponsoring teams from all six of its computer clubhouses in the annual [Greater D.C. Regional Botball Robotics Tournament](#). This event takes place at the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus on April 18<sup>th</sup> with competition starting at 10:00 a.m. and the awards presentation at 5:30 p.m. There are approximately 40 teams participating in this local robotics competition. This year over 6,000 students will participate in Botball events with teams from 22 states and five countries outside of the United States.

Sponsored by NASA and the KISS Robotics Institute, Botball Robotics is a high-energy, high-tech approach to education. Through hands-on experience, students build robots to compete on a well-designed game board. The robots must overcome obstacles and perform certain tasks to score points. Teams compete in a double elimination competition; the teams' Web sites, project documentations and presentations also play a large part in the judges' overall scoring. By integrating science, technology, math and engineering with robotics, students learn cutting-edge technology skills. Each team is required to create a project plan, and perform analysis and design of its robot and the robot software. Three checkpoints during the competition allow each team to submit drawings, pictures, detailed designs, the project plan, and ultimately, the code for grading.

Amy Harris, University and Academic Relations Manager for the Micron Technology Foundation will provide this year's keynote address. In this address taking place at 10:00 a.m., Ms. Harris will discuss the importance that these types of robotics programs are for the U.S. in order to strengthen the pipeline of future technical talent. "It is vital that the U.S. continues to support these types of programs that get students excited to pursue technical degrees that will in turn lead to a pipeline of strong technical leaders," said Ms. Harris.

Local EFF Computer Clubhouses competing include James Lee Community Center (Falls Church), Willston Multicultural Center (Falls Church), Gum Springs Community Center (Alexandria), Mott Community Center (Fairfax), Reston Teen Center (Reston), and Bailey's Community Center (Falls Church). For a full list of teams, representing area computer clubhouses as well as public and private middle and high schools, visit: <http://www.botball.org/current-season/GDC/>

"The EFF Computer Clubhouses provide an innovative and safe after-school learning center where children ages 8-18, many of whom do not have access to technology at home, work with adult mentors to learn, develop and explore their potential," said Colleen Hahn, President and Executive Director of the Equal Footing Foundation. "The importance of Botball to these kids is that this event offers them a rare opportunity to roll up their sleeves and gain practical experience using math, engineering and technology."

For the full schedule, directions and registered teams visit: <http://www.botball.org/current-season/GDC/>

#### **About the Equal Footing Foundation**

The Equal Footing Foundation (EFF) is a 501(C)(3) non profit charity that provides underserved youth in Northern Virginia opportunities to achieve their full potential through youth development and educational initiatives. The core program focuses on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) centered activities delivered through an after-school initiative called the Computer Clubhouse. Built in cooperation with local community centers, EFF's six Computer Clubhouses serve 1,500 students a week. The Computer Clubhouses are part of an international initiative designed to encourage an environment of creativity and learning where students can become fluent with new technologies and develop skills and

experiences that will help them succeed in today's workforce. By providing access to resources, mentors, technology and educational programs, EFF is able to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of students in our community. For more information, visit: [www.efooting.org](http://www.efooting.org).

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