



Teaching Children Science, One LEGO at a Time

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Bruce Shafer
Executive Director, ORTOP

project under the leadership of Intel volunteers. The result is a thought-provoking presentation and a LEGO robot the kids build and program to perform tasks that support the theme.

Impact

Christy Foulger, a Data Analyst in Portland, is just one of the many Intel employees who volunteer with ORTOP. Foulger, who has served as a judge, coach and referee, is a co-director of the program. “I’m amazed by the kids’ ingenuity and how well they learn and advance from each other,” she says. “The fact that kids who are so young can come up with such creative ideas is really inspiring. This is college-level work, and it’s coming out of 11- or 12-year-olds.” Intel-coached teams regularly move on to the state finals. In 2007, an Intel-coached team won the international championship. The most important key value, Foulger adds, is that of gracious professionalism. This philosophy is so important that the teams’ respectful behavior is a factor in the judging. “It’s a core value they’ll need in the workplace,” Foulger says, “so it’s important they learn this now. We as Intel employees have a responsibility to be role models.”

“This is a huge commitment from Intel and its employees,” said Bruce Schafer, ORTOP’s executive director. “Many of our committees are staffed by current and former Intel employees, and Intel is far and away our largest sponsor. Without Intel, we’d have fewer scholarships, and it would be harder to reach out to underserved communities that don’t have the resources to do this on their own.” The legacy of ORTOP and Intel’s commitment to youthful engineers and scientists is just beginning to emerge. “Some of our kids have gone on to become engineering and computer science majors in college,” Schafer says. “Hopefully, some of them will grow up to be Intel employees someday.”



Similar to the sponsorship and support of Intel employees in Oregon, Intel’s other US sites also support robotics tournaments through volunteering and grants as required. Around the world, Intel employees get involved in their communities mentoring students, teaching math and science, increasing access to technology tools for education and working with local organizations to improve the quality of education. Last year in celebration of Intel’s 40th anniversary in 2008, Intel employees contributed over 1.3 million volunteer hours to their local communities and over half of them were for education programs. At Intel, our focus is not simply on the technology we make—it’s on what we make possible for people around the world.