



FLORIDA ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION  
CENTER for EXCELLENCE

NEWS from  
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**PROGRAMMED FOR SUCCESS**

Preparing Students for Robotics and High-Tech Careers

Florida Advanced Technological Education Center, a National Science Foundation regional center of excellence in manufacturing located at Hillsborough Community College in Brandon, hosted an information session highlighting educational and career pathways in robotics and high-tech manufacturing. Programmed for Success—preparing students for robotics and high-tech careers was held Oct. 12 from 6-7 p.m., and involved parents of middle school students from Hillsborough County who attended FLATE's robotics camps in 2008-2009.

This fast-paced program served multiple purposes. It underlined the importance and applicability of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in modern manufacturing and engineering technology operations, as well as in our everyday lives. It also provided information on robotics and technical programs currently offered at middle and high schools throughout Hillsborough County, showcased sample jobs and salary scales of professionals currently employed in STEM and/or high-tech-related careers, and highlighted the related program and lab facilities at HCC.

(MORE)

## 1<sup>st</sup> add Programmed for Success

Attendees also received an overview of the statewide engineering technology degree created by FLATE, particularly the advanced manufacturing program offered at HCC. The ET degree is a hub of many career and educational pathways that tightly link high school programs to community college Associate of Science and/or Associate of Applied Science degrees to national skills certifications and 4-year bachelor degrees. Students and parents were also encouraged to take advantage of the resources available on the “Made in Florida” website.

The mood expressed by parents and kids was one of excitement and eager expectation for a 2010 Summer Robotics Camp program. Parents said the 2009 camp was “a great value,” and “totally hands on...giving kids a perfect blend of learning and doing.” Leticia Benson, one of the parents who attended the program last night said “The robotics camp was unique, I’d never heard of a kid’s camp like this before. My son loved it, it was just a great program...he’ll be back next year.” Her son Joseph Benson, winner of the Lego robot door prize drawing, echoed the sentiments of kids attending last night’s event, “Robots are very cool.”

Indeed, the robotics camps have served as an effective tool in capturing students’ interest in STEM education by integrating them in a robotic platform. Dr. Marilyn Barger, executive director of FLATE said it is important for parents to “start focusing on STEM-related classes right now so their kids are programmed for success in the future.”

**FLATE** is a National Science Foundation Regional Center of Excellence, committed to ensuring Florida has a well-prepared workforce for advanced and emerging technologies related to manufacturing. Created in 2004, FLATE is one of 36 NSF Advanced Technological Education Centers focused on improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education and training to meet the needs of American advanced technology industries.

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