September 29, 2010

AMD Foundation Collaborates With PBS Affiliate KLRN and Whyville.net to Bring Game Development to Youth in the Virtual World

- Program will enable more than six million registered players to build in-world creative games focusing on social issues -

SUNNYVALE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- AMD today announced that the AMD Foundation, in support of AMD Changing the Game, has awarded a grant to San Antonio, TX PBS affiliate KLRN to help enable youth to create games around social issues in Whyville.net, the oldest learning-based virtual world on the Internet. In Whyville.net's 11-year history, more than six million youth from around the world have used the site to explore topics on science, economics and citizenship, and tens of thousands of youths are active players on Whyville.net at any point in time. Once games are created, KLRN will help youth develop video shorts featuring the game creation process including interviews with "Whyvillians" discussing what they learned about creating games. KLRN will broadcast the videos and make them available to PBS stations nationwide. These video shorts will be used to promote game design activities to children, parents and teachers.

The World of Whyville (Photo: Business Wire)

The grant, totaling $200,000, is given in support of AMD's education initiative, AMD Changing the Game. The initiative promotes social issue game development as a tool to inspire youth to learn and improve science, technology, education and math (STEM) skills, while at the same time becoming more aware of global social issues such as energy, the environment, public health and poverty.

"KLRN, as do all PBS affiliates, takes pride in providing exceptional programming to advance education and culture," said William G. Moll, President and CEO of KLRN. "Our television station has a long history of effective educational outreach. This innovative collaboration with AMD and Whyville is right on target to inspire a lifelong love of learning in all children."

"The Whyville virtual world is an award-winning, proven educational Web destination for children, and is an ideal venue to foster social issue game creation," said Jim Bower, founder, Whyville and CEO of Whyville's parent company Numedeon Inc. "Over the last 11 years, Whyville has pioneered Youth Created Content, and Whyville's collaboration with the AMD Foundation and AMD Changing the Game will allow our users to further enrich the dynamic educational environment that we already provide for our virtual citizens."

"KLRN, Whyville and AMD share a common goal of leveraging technology in innovative ways to help excite kids about learning," said Allyson Peerman, president, AMD Foundation.

"This project will allow us to scale the reach of youth game development to millions of registered players in Whyville.net, and especially help us to reach and empower more young women, a key demographic in Whyville's virtual world."

The program is slated to begin with the launch of the AMD "Game Pavilion" within Whyville in early October which will serve as the virtual world hub for these projects.

AMD Changing the Game

AMD Changing the Game is designed to take gaming beyond entertainment and inspire youth to learn critical education and life skills by equipping them to create digital games with social content. The program's purpose is to promote the use of youth game development as a tool to inspire learning and improve science, technology, education and math (STEM) skills. The initiative is rooted in AMD's commitment to and experience in supporting education, and the company's passion and expertise in the graphics processor and gaming industries.

Since its launch in June 2008, AMD Changing the Game has:

- Funded 25 programs by 19 organizations in the United States, China and Malaysia that enable youth game development
- Co-sponsored the U.S. National STEM Video Game Challenge and joined Change the Equation in support of the US Educate to Innovate campaign
- Funded the development of a youth game development curriculum with PETLab and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA)
- Funded the development of the World Wide Workshop Foundation's Globaloria game-design program for the Southwest Key's East Austin College Prep Academy in 2009 and 2010
- Co-sponsored the Malaysian Cybergames Festival 2010, including the "Dare to Create" digital game design and development workshop
- Funded the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers new video game design category for the 2010 and 2011 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards
- Funded Schmahl Science Workshop's program to develop a sustainable fishing video game to communicate the danger of over fishing to long-term human survival
- Co-sponsored the 2008, 2009 and 2010 Games for Change Festival. The 2010 sponsorship included a day-long workshop sponsored by the AMD Foundation to teach educators about the various tools available for youth game development

About the AMD Foundation

The AMD Foundation connects and empowers individuals with knowledge, thereby opening doors to opportunity. The Foundation's signature program, AMD Changing the Game, supports initiatives designed to help youth harness the power of digital games with social content, while learning critical Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills and life skills. The Foundation also funds the AMD Employee Giving Program which supports AMD employees' community interests by matching their personal donations of time and money to local organizations and schools.

Supporting Resources

AMD Changing the Game Facebook page

About Whyville.net

Whyville.net is the premiere educational virtual world for children, imbedding simulation-based learning in an engaging and safe collaborative gaming social environment. For eleven years, the site has successfully created an environment that engages its "citizens" to learn about life, while having fun. In Whyville, kids play, socialize, compete, learn, design, eat, dance, govern and much more. Numedeon Inc., the parent company of Whyville, was created by scientists from the California Institute of Technology who combined research expertise in learning and education with advanced simulation and virtual world technology to harness the power of the Internet to engage young users. At greater than 30 minutes per log in, Whyville is one of the stickiest and most engaging of all virtual worlds (ComScore Media Metrics) and recently surpassed more than 6.5 million registered accounts. A testament to Whyville's dedication to education and safety, the site has won numerous media and parent awards, including a Gold Award for the National Parenting Publications Awards (NAPPA).

About AMD

Advanced Micro Devices (NYSE: AMD) is an innovative technology company dedicated to collaborating with customers and technology partners to ignite the next generation of computing and graphics solutions at work, home and play. For more information, visit http://www.amd.com.

AMD, the AMD Arrow logo, and combinations thereof are trademarks of Advanced Micro Devices, Inc. Other names are for informational purposes only and may be trademarks of their respective owners.

Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=6447081&lang=en

Source: Advanced Micro Devices