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AZFirst Receives Science Foundation Arizona and Stardust Foundation Grant to Support FIRST(R) Robotics Competition in Arizona

CHANDLER, Ariz.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Microchip Technology Inc. (NASDAQ: MCHP), a leading provider of microcontroller and analog semiconductors, today announced that AZFirst, an Arizona 501(c)(3) organization supporting FIRST^(R) (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) after-school programs in Arizona, is the recipient of a \$150,000 grant from Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) and The Stardust Foundation. FIRST connects high school students, educators, the community and industry in a collaborative effort to teach students STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) principles through a team-driven robot-building project that culminates in an exciting, fast-paced, robotics competition. The grant will fund teacher stipends, workshops and robot development kits for FRC (FIRST Robotics Competition) high school teams in Arizona. Students who participate on a FIRST team are eligible for over \$9.8 million in scholarships.

By working with industry mentors, students in the FIRST program learn engineering, physics, programming and science, in addition to other life skills such as critical thinking, public speaking, creativity and time management. Carol Popovich, Microchip Academic Program manager, and Steve Sanghi, president and CEO of Microchip and member of the FIRST Board of Directors, are Principle Investigators for the matching funds grant. "FIRST isn't about building robots--it's about developing life skills. The kids learn skills in relationship building, teamwork, finance, fundraising and project management," said Sanghi.

"Science Foundation Arizona is working to ensure students have opportunities to prepare themselves for highly skilled, well-paid employment in the 21st century," said William C. Harris, president and CEO of Science Foundation Arizona. "AZFirst promotes engineering, physics, programming and science in a way that is meaningful for students and encourages them to pursue higher education and careers in these needed industries."

In order to receive the grant, AZFirst raised \$150,000. SFAz and The Stardust Foundation matched these funds. "This is a huge opportunity to have an impact on STEM education, and prepare our children to create a stronger economy and a better future through technology," said Popovich. "With the funding from this grant, and additional monies raised to further support FIRST in Arizona, we have the potential to change a culture, where students become aware of the opportunities, fun and excitement offered to them by continued education."

For more information about AZFirst or FIRST in Arizona, contact Carol Popovich at 480-792-7938 or first@microchip.com. For more information about Science Foundation Arizona, contact Jessica Gonzalez at 623-256-3513 or jgonzalez@eblane.com.

About Science Foundation Arizona

Science Foundation Arizona (SFAz) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization initiated in 2006 by the Greater Phoenix Leadership Inc., Southern Arizona Leadership Council and the Flagstaff Forty. Its goal is to build and strengthen science, engineering and biomedicine in areas of greatest strategic value to Arizona's competitiveness in the global economy. SFAz is investing in partnerships between non-profit research institutions and industry, and in the education pipeline to attract and support a knowledge-driven economy.

About The Stardust Foundation

The Stardust Foundation is a non-profit corporation designed to selectively provide by-invitation-only grants to organizations that impact the linked concepts of family and neighborhood stability. For more information, visit <http://www.stardustco.com/>.

About FIRST

Accomplished inventor Dean Kamen founded FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) in 1989 to inspire an appreciation of science and technology in young people. Based in Manchester, N.H., FIRST designs accessible, innovative programs to build self-confidence, knowledge and life skills while motivating young people to pursue opportunities in science, technology and engineering.

The FIRST Robotics Competition challenges teams of young people and their mentors to solve a common problem in a six-week timeframe using a standard "kit of parts" and a common set of rules. Teams build robots from the parts and enter them in a series of competitions designed by Dean Kamen, Dr. Woodie Flowers, and a committee of engineers and other professionals. Students participating on FIRST teams are eligible to apply for over \$9 million in scholarships.

Chandler-based Microchip Technology is the Organizing Sponsor and a "Leader in Technology Sponsor" of the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) 2009 Arizona Regional.

About Microchip Technology

Microchip Technology Inc. (NASDAQ: MCHP) is a leading provider of microcontroller and analog semiconductors, providing low-risk product development, lower total system cost and faster time to market for thousands of diverse customer applications worldwide. Headquartered in Chandler, Ariz., Microchip offers outstanding technical support along with dependable delivery and quality. For more information, visit the Microchip website at <http://www.microchip.com>.

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